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THROUGH RUSSIA.

VOL. II.

COSTUMES OF PEASANTS, BETWEEN MOSCOW AND KAZAN.

THROUGH RUSSIA:

FROM

ST. PETERSBURG TO ASTRAKHAN AND THE CRIMEA.

BY

MRS. GUTHRIE.

ASTRAKHAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THROUGH RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

A Voyage on the Volga—Arrival of Passengers—Scene on Deck—Sailing on the Volga—Universal Tea-drinking—An Armenian Family—Nijni—Makarief—Our German Captain—Freezing of the Volga—The River by Night—Difficulty of procuring Bedding—Cheboksary—A Disappointment—Rafts on the Volga—Kara Tartars—Bolgarz—Christian Settlements—Fields of Héchat—Devotion of the Russians—Simbirsk—Popes and Old Believers—Stavropol.

IN the cool air of early morning we packed up, paid our bill, which was moderate, distributed tea-money to a small amount amongst the grateful Cheloveks, and, getting into the carriage, escorted by our Jew, bade adieu to Nijni-Novgorod and its far-famed fair—undoubtedly a curious sight, but a whole week's bustle, confusion, excitement, and dust

appeared to have been concentrated into the single day we spent amidst it. We found our steamer hissing alongside the quay, and stepping on board, were kindly greeted by the captain, who, seeing us about to descend into the cabin, advised us to arrange our things at once, and to return to watch the influx of passengers, when we should see a truly national scene. Nothing loth, we stowed our goods and chattels, some under the sofas, others in the broad nets and shelves above them, and made up our minds to be thoroughly comfortable.

The boats belonging to the Volga Company are passenger-boats, which carry little merchandise, and the class of people who travel by this route have not much in the way of luggage. In they poured, with pillows, tea-pots, baskets of provisions, and shubas, each individual or family at once squatting on the spot which they took possesion of for the rest of their journey, long or short. Some spread themselves on benches, others crept underneath, where they could lie at their ease without being walked over, and many encamped in corners which they imagined would be shady. A convenient bench, behind the funnel, was appropriated by a respectable couple. The woman, stout and middle-aged, had honest, clear grey eyes, and a clean cotton

gown. Her husband, who must have been at least six feet three, was pale, blue-eyed, and lanky, with crimson shirt, black cotton velvet coat, immense wrinkled boots, with red tops, which served as extra pockets, and a round cap. We christened them the "comfortable couple." The other side of the funnel was blocked up by a great square stack of wood, behind which camped an untidy woman with a heap of children, who occupied herself swinging a *liuleka*, a kind of hammock or national cradle, made of coarse linen, effectively embroidered at the ends in coloured thread, in which she deposited her baby, and swayed it gently off to sleep.

The whole deck, fore and aft, thus became covered with groups of people. Here a grey-coated Cossack soldier, distinguished by the rows of cartridge-cases sloping across his breast —there a moujik with sheepskin shuba, wide-awake, stout stick, and bandaged legs; the peasant dressed in his cloth coat lined with fur, forming the connecting link between the above, and the petty tradesmen clad in cotton velvet. A tall, hooked-nosed Armenian, attired in silken vest and straight-cut lower garment, bordered with little tassels, and ornamented with thread of gold, stood at the door of the cabin reserved for first-class passengers, sur-

veying the scene with eagle eyes; and a small coxcombical Circassian, wearing a glittering silver belt, strutted about, and got more pushes than became his notions of dignity. It was very amusing; but our paddle-wheels turned, the engines sobbed, soft words were thrown on board from those on shore, and in another moment we were ploughing the waters of the Volga, on a voyage of eighteen hundred miles. The bridge of boats, with its restless crowd, faded away, and soon the gigantic cross, flashing over the cathedral, was all that remained to us of Nijni-Novgorod. It, too, finally vanished, like a candle snuffed out in the sunshine, and we thankfully bade adieu to the dustiest and most tumultuous town we had ever been in—a little daunted, perhaps, by remembering that we had no more letters of introduction to strew our path with roses, no more French secretaries, consuls, or commissionaires. We had easily enough shot thus far into the vast and strange country, but should we get out of it again with as little trouble?

Fairly afloat, we began to feel afflicted by the pangs of hunger, and how to get a *déjeûner* was the next problem to be solved. After some consideration, taking our taxa, which was certainly half a yard long, we sat down in the

ladies' cabin and hailed the stewardess, a good-natured looking woman, with the grey eyes and cotton dress owned by so many of her compatriots. Speaking was useless, so we pointed to words which we fondly trusted meant mutton-chops, sterlet, and soda water, taking great care to make it understood that *two* people wanted feeding. The time appeared long, but at the end of half an hour the very things we had chosen made their appearance. The cutlets, to be sure, were Russian fashion, being made of mincemeat fried in the form of cutlets; and they proved very good. The sterlet was arranged with gravy, sauce, and capers; and, if too rich for our fancy, made the bread, which, by-the-by, was excellent, go down. We were vastly content with our first experience, and coming to the conclusion that at all events we were not going to be starved, mounted to the deck with cheerful hearts. There a universal tea-drinking was the order of the day. Our "comfortable couple" had drawn from their basket a morsel of sausage and a pot of caviare. The golden tint of the liquid in their tumblers vouched for the quality of their chai. Glass after glass went down. To supply these people with hot water alone would be an endless task, were not the process simplified by a cock, which all

could turn, in communication with the boiler. The slatternly family managed their affairs in a muddling way; they had some coarse salt butter with their rye bread; the colouring of the liquid in the endless tumblers discussed was of the palest, and they left dirty bits of paper and crumbs about. We were amused with two men, who, hot as the day was, were muffled up in coats lined with thick fur. They had a little table between them, and sat and drank the morning away. Their tea-pot was large, but we saw it filled at least four times, and were told that over a bargain a man will often discuss as many as sixteen glasses. The little deck cabin was quite an oasis in the midst of the turmoil. It contained sofa, benches, and a good-sized table; its only occupants were a lady and two little girls, belonging to the Armenian gentleman. They were charming, black-eyed, rosy things, and promised to be as handsome as their mother, a beauty of some eight-and-twenty years, very plump, and of the brunette order, with a clear, glowing complexion, and long, dark, almond-shaped eyes with deep fringes. We looked kindly at one another, but had, alas! no language in common, which we regretted.

With the Russian passion for pictures, they

were not likely to be omitted on board. We had a Virgin and Child in one corner, and a large saint with a brilliant glory in another. Having taken stock of these things, we mounted to an upper deck provided with an awning and benches. The steersman was at one end, and the other was occupied by rows of leathern buckets, full of water, the sparks from the wood being apt to set the awning on fire, as many a hole testified. The river rolled on swift, broad, and troubled. The low banks, fringed with scrubby brushwood, had no beauty to recommend them. The scene was fine but desolate, there were so few signs of human occupation. The morning fled rapidly away in tranquillity, which was delightful, after the fatigues of the previous day. Those who could afford to dine from the restaurant, did so between four and five o'clock. The Armenians, along with their Russian *bonne*, who spoke a few words of French, took their meals in the deck cabin, and some half-dozen men had their little tables spread under the awning. We preferred the large ladies' cabin, of which we had sole possession, the Armenians having stowed themselves away in that belonging to the gentlemen. With the addition of stchi, which lacked

the sour cream, our dinner was a repetition of breakfast, and we wound up with two great glasses of clear yellow chai, an agreeable and invigorating Summer drink.

We were in a hurry to finish before arriving at Makarief, our first station, seventy-two miles from Nijni. It was a small colourless town, built of planks, with a copper-headed church. There was a little pier and warehouses, and sheds skirted the shore, some of which were full of baggage belonging to the Volga Company. And here, for the first time, we saw the neat way in which the wood is brought on board. Women alone are employed in the service. Two and two they bring their load, piled upon a kind of wide flat ladder, which separates with a jerk, and allows it to fall upon the deck, where it is stacked by the sailors. The ladies thereupon retreat, each bearing half of the machine, which, reunited on shore, is hastily heaped with another cargo. They were fine, large, kindly-looking women, with clean print dresses, and coloured handkerchiefs twisted round their heads. A quantity of loaves were here taken on shore, and eagerly bought up, the captain telling us that there was no white bread to be had along the river, except what was brought by the steamers; he had provision for

nine hundred miles down stream, the companion boat bringing up from Astrakhan sufficient for the other half of the journey. He reckoned the distance from Nijni to Astrakhan to be eighteen hundred miles, allowing for the windings of the river, but the mate considered that it was seventeen hundred. The flow of the stream is six miles an hour, and we went at a great pace, not less than eleven miles. The pace, however, is slacker at night, and sometimes the boat lay-to until daybreak.

Floating away from Makarief, we ran down to fetch our shawls, for the evening air was chilly. A second edition of tea-drinking was going on, and, not to be outdone in conviviality, we ordered glasses to be brought to the upper deck, where the captain also was indulging. He was a tall, fine, gentlemanly man, the son of a German officer living at Hamburg;—some of the society of which place, he said, was very pleasant, the naval and military men who settle down there, for the purpose of educating their families, making a circle of their own. He told us how he had brought his vessel all the way from Glasgow, complete as she was, down the Clyde, along the English coast, and through the stormy North Sea, into the Baltic, up the Gulf of Finland to Lake

Ladoga, and from thence through broad canals into the waters of the "great river," thenceforth to be its home.

The Volga Company is liberal in its payments, his own salary as captain being eight hundred a year, and he was expecting a better appointment. The steamers are able to run from the middle of May until the commencement of October, when the first frosts begin, and the river is covered with a thin coating called glass ice, which quickly thickens, until all water communication is interrupted. The Volga, however, never freezes sufficiently to allow of sledging, and the post-waggon which at intervals toils over the dreary steppes, takes between three weeks and a month to perform its journey from Astrakhan to Nijni. But woe be to the travellers who meet a boura on these solitary wilds! Such is the name given to a kind of whirlwind, which renders the air so thick with the finest powdered snow that it is almost impossible to breathe it and live. The expense of the wood consumed by these boats is considerable. It is brought down to the different stations on rafts, principally from the forests of Muscovy, and its cost, between Nijni and Astrakhan, is computed at £145 sterling.

We were still sitting and talking when the

moon of three quarters began to throw her beams upon the wild scene. Our boat hugged the eastern shore, but many a vessel glided along in the smoother current under the opposite bank. The river was very wide at this part, and they swept by like silent, mysterious shadows. One steamer came rushing along, the sparks from her chimney looking like the tail of a comet, while our own trail resembled a brilliant firework. At last we grew sleepy, and descending the ladder, found the little world on deck wrapped in slumber. Our comfortable couple and their bench had disappeared under blankets and sheep-skins; the moujiks lay on their faces, closely resembling the animals whose coats they had stolen. Chintz-covered cushions, and patchwork counterpanes, cropped up everywhere. The people lay so thick that we had some difficulty in picking our way amidst the human bundles. As for the Armenians, they had disappeared altogether.

In spite of our last night's experience, we expected to find in our cabin something in the shape of blankets and pillows, and the clean, holland-covered sofas looked chill and uninviting. My companion made an attempt to obtain bedding from the puzzled stewardess, who saw that we wanted something, but could not tell

what; the Russians, though they have a quick perception in some things, not being apt at understanding signs. However, at last she brought a sheet, which proved to be so dirty that it was declined, with a shower of *spassibos* (thanks) and *dobraya notches* (good nights). After all, a clean sofa is, in Summer, no bad substitute for a bed, and spreading out our linen and plaids, we slept most comfortably, only waking up now and then at the cry of the steersman, to be lulled to sleep again by the sobbing of the rushing river.

Soon after daybreak we stopped for a few minutes at Cheboksary, and stole into the vacant lady's cabin, in order to catch a glimpse of its leaning tower and fortified monastery. It is said to be one of the prettiest towns on the Volga, but in the subdued light of early dawn its dentellated walls of red brick looked grim and sombre enough. The sun shone bravely out when we mounted the deck, some three hours afterwards; but there a considerable disappointment awaited us. For some reason the boat was two hours behind her time, and the captain assured us, with many expressions of regret, that it was impossible for us to visit Kazan, which lay seven miles inland, as he could not afford the necessary time. We endeavoured to

console ourselves by the assurance that we should have found the fourteen miles of dust, which lay a foot deep upon the road, almost intolerable; but it was with great regret that we found ourselves obliged to relinquish visiting the old Tartar town, although it now contains no building of earlier date than the reign of Ivan IV., who took the city with an army of 150,000 men, and utterly destroyed the original settlement.

It became Russian in 1552, and the anniversary is still kept up. Even the traces of Ivan's reign were nearly effaced by Pugachef, who set fire to the place in the year 1774. The modern town contains a university, and is rendered prosaic by numbers of factories and tan-pits, soap, wax, and leather reigning supreme where once the Princes of the Golden Horde kept state. But Kazan is most favourably situated for trade, being near the junction of the Kama with the Volga; the productions of India also reach its marts through the caravans from Persia to Bokhara. The Kazan Tartars are considered hard-working, honest, and good men of business, and lately many of them have adopted the Russian costume. Approaching Kazan, the Russian population gives way to the Tartar. The term Tartar, in

Russian, means a Turk of one of the Khanates; but, wherever they are to be found, Tartars really belong to the great Turk family, and of that family only the Tartars in the Kazan country are now Mussulmans. They are not bigotted—in earlier times they were Buddhists.

The captain told us that the Tartars differed much in type, some resembling the Osmanli, or Turk of Constantinople, with oval face, fine features and eyes, and well-grown beards; whilst others have broad, flat noses, prominent cheek-bones, and sly, slanting eyes.

Innumerable were the boats ascending the stream, varied and curious in shape. Some were rafts of pine-trees, fastened together into broad, floating masses, with huts for the better sort of travellers. The poorer earn their passage by lending a hand at the oars, the wallet containing their black bread, a tin cup to dip in the river, the hairy garments they stand in, and the leaden image hung round their necks, constituting their sole worldly possessions. Desirous, probably, of obtaining a blessing at the shrine of St. Sergius, they may have found their way from hundreds of miles beyond the Ural Mountains, or even from the green slopes of Kamschatka; for even Kamschatka has its short-lived Summer, at which time the herbage, we were

told, is of peculiar brilliancy. The master dwells in his cabin of planks, and on every raft there is a shrine. We could see the simple people on their knees before the metal, draped Virgin, or saint, on whose holy head a red or golden light descended from the ever-burning lamp suspended above. Raft after raft we watched struggling up the stream, until it became a speck in the distance, and vanished out of sight; but they were less picturesque than the barges which, having descended the Kama, were bearing their precious burdens of metal from the Province of Perm and the Siberian mines. These were large flat-bottomed boats, with high wooden bulwarks, most richly and effectively carved in strange patterns. They contained, too, a floating population, with wooden cabins in lines which left lanes between their ranks. On them stood whole villages, with holy pictures, large shrines, and stocks of merchandise. The barges, with covered roof, the captain said, were filled with commodities of a more delicate description, brought by caravan from afar.* When we drew

* Mr. Atkinson, in his "Siberia," gives an account of these barques, which are built upon the banks of the Tchonssowain. "They are flat-bottomed, with straight sides. They are from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and forty feet long, and from eight to nine feet deep. The ribs of these barges are of birch, and the planking of deal. There is not

near to the station for Kazan the scene was most animated, and as we turned and moored at the little pier the people on shore eagerly hailed the boat which brought them their white bread, and were anxious to sell their own grapes and water-melons in return. There was a general exodus from the ship here, each human being returning with an immense melon. We obtained one from the stewardess, which must have weighed four or five pounds, and was beautiful to look at, but when cut into the flesh deepened into a bright pink, proving once more the truth of the adage, "*Nimium ne crede colori*," for it was anything but good to eat.

Whilst we were taking in our wood, two steamers came alongside, freighted from the

a nail or an iron bolt about them, they being put together with wooden pins, and they must be built the year before they are launched. The decks are formed of strong boards framed together, but not fastened to the barge; a very necessary precaution, as they are often sunk in deep water, after stranding upon the rocks. When this happens the floating deck forms a substantial raft. A barque laden to the extent of 10,000 poods requires a crew of forty men. It is propelled against the stream by oars with flat blades, which guide it at the head and stern. A man stands upon a raised platform to look out, and direct its course. These boats glide down the Tchoussowain into the Kama, and from thence into Russia's great highway, the Volga.".

Caspian, their decks strewn with bales and boxes of fruit, to be disposed of at Nijni. On them slumbered innumerable Persians, with straight-cut silken robes and tall conical caps of well-curled lamb-skin. They appeared to be almost too lazy even to smoke the long pipes with stems of cherry-stick, which seemed slipping from their languid grasp. The awnings above them were wreathed with loops of sausages, onions, rings of bread, and bunches of grapes; and little heaps of gourds and melons cropped up on deck like pyramids of cannon balls. The scene was so amusing and novel that the hour and a half we spent in watching it passed all too quickly, until at last a group of Kazan-Tartars came on board, and off we steamed once more. They were odd-looking creatures, in chintz dressing-gowns, with long plaits of hair hanging down their backs, yellow skins, and sly slanting grey eyes. They certainly were not of the Osmanli type.

There is something particularly soothing and tranquillizing in a long coasting or river voyage. We had enjoyed the blue lakes and monotonous forests of Sweden, but life on the Volga was on a larger scale. The constant change of landscape, the variety of people, all brought before us without fatigue or trouble, and the

complete rest we enjoyed, were delightful.

Amongst the countless vessels bound to Nijni, there were some from the Caspian which struck us as exceedingly strange. Standing high out of the water, they resembled ancient galleys, or Chinese junks, being painted red, with green dragons, fish, and birds in relief, while on each side of the prominent prow was a great staring eye in black and white. An excited fancy might have taken them for terrible marine monsters, seeking whom they might devour. But they were innocently ascending the stream, aided by sail and oar, and were laden with early fruits, forced in the rich slimy soil which encircles that unwholesome sea.

On the eastern side of the river, not far from Kazan, stands the modern village of Bolgarz. Its convent and church are built out of the ruins of the ancient town of Vrachimo; and in its neighbourhood coins of silver and copper are frequently found, with Arabic legends in Cufic characters. There are also the remains of inscriptions on stone, in Cufic, dating from the year of the Hegira, 623. We were now close upon a thousand miles from Tver, where we had first seen the childish Volga, glowing bright and blue through fresh green woods. It was older, broader, deeper now, and was

soon to receive a mighty addition to its strength from the waters of the Kama, which, after running a course of eleven hundred miles, pour into "the great river." It is said to be navigated by 1700 vessels, besides rafts, and lends its aid to facilitate the journey from London to Pekin, which, according to Mr. Mitchell, can be accomplished in fifty days. We perceived one principal mouth, and two or three smaller ones, after passing which the volume and width of the Volga were perceptibly increased. At Simbirsk it is three miles from shore to shore. It is only whilst ploughing one of Russia's great streams, passing the mouths of other rivers which have run their course through forest and plain for hundreds of miles, and regarding the vessels congregated upon their surface from distant seas and provinces far inland, that the vast watery net-work which ramifies over this great country in every direction, can be fully understood and realized.

There were few signs of human life to be seen on the low sandy banks, whence wild steppes rolled inland on either side. To our left they were thinly sprinkled with little Christian settlements, amongst whose inhabitants exists almost every imaginable form of dissent, and

some of whom possess the wildest and most extraordinary opinions. It has been stated on good authority that there are two hundred and fifty different forms of dissent in Russia To our right the shore was ranged by the tameless tribes of the Eastern steppes, amongst which still exist the descendants of the Buddhist Hordes who fought so bravely under Batu Khan. Steppe is a Russian word, signifying these vast undulating plains, called by oriental authors "the fields of Hechat." They occupy above one-fifth of European Russia, are twice the size of fair France (for fair she still is, though no longer a Kingdom or an Empire), and, except near Kazan, are totally devoid of trees. Some imagine them to have been covered with forests in ancient times; but Sir Roderick Murchison disbelieves that such ever existed, and thinks that the reason given by the natives for the utter nudity of their plains, the entire absence, namely, of dew, is the true one. One hundred and fifty millions of acres, with a foundation of rocks of all ages, are covered with a fine black soil, "so light," says Murchison, "that it rises in clouds so dense that it begrimes the traveller like a working collier." It varies from a few feet to twenty feet in thickness. Its extreme fertility, the same writer continues, is

attributed to the unusual quantity of nitrogen contained in it; and its origin he refers to the period when the Russian continent was still submerged, and the Tchorno Ziemé was the mud at the bottom of a great internal sea. This rich black country lies chiefly between the Dniestr, the Don, and the Volga, and grows magnificent corn." On the granite steppes which reach towards the Crimea, the black soil ceases, but they yield a carpet of fine, thick, elastic herbage. To the east again lie large tracts of limestone and chalk, and during the short-livid Summer these prairies present a beautiful aspect—grasses, reeds, and cones, tall enough to conceal a man, mingling with flowers of the utmost brilliancy, but almost destitute of perfume. When the vigour of the crop begins to decay, it dries at once, and becomes excellent fodder for cattle; but it is occasionally dangerous for sheep, on account of a certain prickly plant which flourishes in wet seasons.

From our lofty position on the upper deck we could observe the movements of the tea-drinking population below. Twice every day were those tall glasses everlastingly replenished, and now all were busy over their melons, probably the first they had obtained that season. Slice after slice disappeared, and

rhind, pips, and juice by no means contributed to the general tidiness or cleanliness, which had suffered considerable diminution since we started. Half of our little world were bound to Astrakhan; the other half consisted of passengers from station to station; and as we rarely stopped more than twice, or at the most three times, in the twenty-four hours, many must have been landed far from their destination. We had a good deal of conversation with the mate, a young German, who looked everybody straight in the face with a pair of honest brown eyes; but tired with the glare, and the heat of the chimney, we spent the afternoon in the glass cabin, with the Armenian family. We were anxious to hear them converse, the Armenians having a theory that theirs is the original language of Adam and Eve. They explain this idea by saying that after the Deluge they settled down near the site of Eden, and, refusing to lend their aid in erecting the Tower of Babel, remained at home and retained the original tongue. The words which dropped from the gentleman's mouth were rolling and sonorous, but the lady spoke softly, as persuasive Eve might have done. As for the children, they prattled and lisped as all children have prattled and lisped since Cain and

Abel were born. They were certainly a singularly handsome family. The little things were cutting out paper, and we soon made acquaintance with them by making a series of paper boxes. We could also make purses, but thought proper to reserve that branch of art for another day, and without being able to communicate by a single word, we became excellent friends.

As we sat, many a dishevelled head was poked through the windows, and many a devout prayer addressed to the pictured corners. There is something very touching in the simple devotion of the Russian peasant. Making this remark some time afterwards to the captain, a grim smile overspread his face. "Yes," he said, "I give them a Holy Virgin in one corner, and St. Nicholas in the other" (the patron saint of thieves), "and I take good care to have them well secured into the wall. When I first took this ship, I had them only hung on a peg, but my simple passengers were so devout that I lost one after another, and then for some time I had none at all; but such general horror was expressed at sailing in a vessel without an image, that I was obliged to replace them." He went on to relate a story which (barring the miracle) happened within his own knowledge at Astrakhan. There is a celebrated pic-

ture of the Virgin in the cathedral there, and amongst other jewels she possesses are some fine brilliants, which are set in her projecting crown. It was observed that a devout lady belonging to the town was particularly fond of kissing this image, and one day, in an excess of enthusiasm, bit out the centre diamond. But the image, full of wrath at so impudent a theft, caused her to choke so violently that the sacristan came to her assistance, and the brilliant fell out of her mouth at his feet.*

We drew up at Simbirsk, about six o'clock in the evening. The town, having met with many disasters, is now much diminished in size, but there were still extensive rows of warehouses along the wharf. It lies on the western steppes in the black soil country, and drives a gainful trade in grain. It was besieged and burnt by the great marauder, Stenka Razin, and afterwards became the prison of the rebel Pugachef, who was conveyed to it in an iron cage, by command of Suvaroff; and late in the present century it was set on fire, probably by accident, when the greater part of the town perished, and has never been rebuilt. There was more

* This we afterwards found was a common Russian story.

than usual agitation amongst the buyers and sellers, which was fully shared by us when we saw that they were vending the reddest of wood strawberries along with bottles of cream. We nearly missed getting a share, having no vessel to pour them into; but the captain came to our aid, and lent us a bowl and a bottle.

We now began to perceive that each station had its *spécialité*, and determined to set up in the world for ourselves. I accordingly left my companion to arrange our feast, and stepping on shore, waded through dust half a foot deep to the row of grey wooden shops which formed the main street of Simbirsk. Here, boldly entering a pot-shop, I pounced upon two china bowls, and a couple of highly-glazed wooden spoons, and putting a ruble into the hand of their owner, held out mine for the change, and receiving a quantity of copeks, bore off my newly-acquired treasures in triumph. There never were such strawberries and cream as the strawberries and cream we supped off that night. They did not, however, prevent us from taking our chai on the upper deck with the captain. He was always in a communicative mood over "the cup which cheers," and, amongst other topics, gave us the history of our Armenian friends. Monsieur, he said, was

a corn-merchant, who was very rich, and lived at Astrakhan. Each year he took his family to Moscow to see the world, and they were now returning from their Summer's holiday. He declared that, ten years before, Madame had been perfectly beautiful, which we could well believe; and he gave us an account of her wedding, at which he had been present. The marriage ceremony, which he described as curious, occupied the whole morning, after which there was a grand and lengthy dinner. The guests then departed, and all the world retired to rest, the doors, however, being carefully left open; for it is Armenian etiquette that the bridegroom should steal the bride from the unwilling parents. In the dead of the night he comes, accompanied by one or two friends, and carries her off to his own home; after which the family discovers the theft, and are inconsolable. Certainly Madame must have been worth stealing.

At Simbirsk we had taken on board a pope in a green satin robe, as well as some gipsies—a man and two wild-looking women, with long, black, dishevelled locks and ardent eyes. These gipsies range the eastern steppes in great numbers, and have considerable musical talent. The Princess Galitsin was a gipsy, but we

could not learn the particulars of her history, which must have been curious. Our skipper had no fancy for popes; the two last he had shipped were tipsy, and so ill-behaved and riotous that he had them put into a boat and landed on the shore, to get on as they could. But of all passengers he declared the most disagreeable to be the Old Believers. They quarrel with everybody, save those of their own persuasion; gather themselves up, for fear of being contaminated; refuse to sit on the same bench with anybody else, and scarcely deign to eat of the food prepared for other people. We were sorry that none came on board during our voyage, that we might have had the full enjoyment of their eccentricities.

The captain was full of some most beautiful scenery that we were to pass in the morning. Nothing on the Rhine, he declared, approached it, and he made us promise to get up at five in order to see it. It is a curious fact that, if ever there is a beautiful spot to be seen during a voyage, the boat is certain to pass it at some most inconvenient hour. To make sure of us, he gave instructions to have us called at half-past four. We scarcely seemed to have slept an hour, when the stewardess came thundering at the door. It was no use trying to rouse

my companion; nothing was to be got from her but a grunt of dissatisfaction; so, being obliged to do duty alone, I put on my clothes in a moment, and crept to the upper deck, where it was damp and raw. The western steppes lay three miles off, but we were hugging the eastern shore, and passing under banks of sandstone, which stood up like red walls fringed with wood. Some were perpendicular, but others sloped to the water, in which case the forest also crept to the river's brink; and here and there a high bluff stood picturesquely forth. For the Volga such scenery was magnificent, and if one's eyes had been open, it would have been pretty anywhere; at the same time, the captain had greatly exaggerated its beauty. Half of our little world were still slumbering under skins and shubas, but the pope was matinal, and I enjoyed the advantage of seeing him perform his morning's toilet. He had laid aside the green satin dress, to which he owed his portly and dignified appearance, and looked miserable enough in the light under-garment which reached to his heels, the shining material of which was rendered still more lustrous by being exceedingly greasy. First, he rubbed his face with a dirty blue pocket-handkerchief;

next, taking a dilapidated horn comb from his pocket, he did his back hair by passing the said comb through the long straggling locks, which he then rolled up into a tight little ball behind his head, securing it with a black pin. It was just such a *coiffure* as a London char-woman might have exhibited if her cap had flown off. Having sympathised sufficiently with the captain, I was by no means sorry to escape from the chilly air, and to finish my night's rest under a warm plaid.

Below this point of the river an immense projecting elbow of land causes the Volga to turn abruptly to the south, and then again to the west, taking the vessel nearly a hundred miles out of her course. This vast tract of land, which we were skirting the whole day, was granted by Catherine to the Orloff family, and now belongs to Prince Orloff Davidoff. It must, however, be remembered that the proprietors in Russia estimate their riches, not so much by the extent of their soil as by the population upon it; and here the live-long day we never saw a sign of human occupation. Great flocks of pelicans were fishing in the shallow creeks, looking in the distance like patches of milk-white sheep, and fine herds of cattle and droves of

horses sought the water of their own accord. Almost all these cattle are slaughtered when the frost sets in. The whole animal, after being skinned, is boiled down into tallow and glue, the bones being stacked for exportation to foreign countries, when the Volga is once more at liberty to bear the scudding ships upon its bosom. Our captain had once entered into a speculation for preserving meat, but it had proved a failure. A railway, when established along the shores of the Volga, will prodigiously enrich this country, by carrying off the produce which cannot now be disposed off; already great rafts were floating down the stream, destined to be converted into sleepers and telegraphic poles. Many of the rafts down stream bore pilgrims, who were making their way to Odessa, there to take ship in order to reach the shores of Syria; and the government has so arranged that, for the sum of seven pounds, a man can be carried from Odessa to Jerusalem, and back to his own country. These rafts also bear a less romantic burden, in the shape of butter from the Siberian meadows, which is largely exported to Turkey and Greece.

The next day's provision of wood was taken in at Stavropol, a small, grey, dusty modern

town, where, stepping on shore, we walked up the one long straggling street, which was lined with low wooden houses. But even this solitary place was celebrated for its own particular production, and all our passengers returned to the ship laden with small jars. Not a little curious to know what they contained, we went and asked the mate. The *spécialite* of Stavropol proved to be mustard, and some curious pottery was also brought on board to sell; brown and green and highly-glazed, it bore some resemblance to Minton. We should have liked some of the ornamental pieces, but their size and weight made them impossible for us to carry. Before ordering our *dejeûner*, we received a word of advice from the captain, who assured us that eating sterlet every day was highly dangerous, and apt to cause fever. We thanked him for his warning, but mildly remarked that our choice of dishes was so limited by our ignorance of the language, that we should be half-starved if we gave up the sterlet. In this difficulty he advised us to send the mate to see what else was to be had. We did so at once, and he came back, having replaced the sterlet by a bird called a streppet. He said that game was plentiful upon the steppes, there being partridge, quail, snipe,

woodcock, and hares; but the absence of cover proves inimical to wild beasts. Now and then a solitary wolf may be met with; but they never consort together in packs. Burrowing animals are, however, innumerable, and prove dangerous to the horseman, who, crashing through the thin coat of earth, suddenly plunges into an excavation.

Having satisfied hungry nature, we mounted the cabin stairs and surveyed the groups on deck. The comfortable couple were, as usual at that hour, indulging in chai and caviare, but even Madame was none the cleaner for her three days' voyage, although she did occasionally put her hands under a cock. No one else, however, that we could see, ever touched water externally. The deck was swept every morning, but that was all, the company being too numerous to allow of mopping, and with grease, and melon, and scraps of all sorts trodden about, the dirt was great. The slatternly mother was lankier and more oppressed than ever; the big girl tyrannized over the smaller ones; the baby lay screaming in its liuleka, and the smell of the dirty shubas, and the ancient skins scattered about, was anything but pleasant. The sun shining down fiercely, we sought refuge in the ladies' cabin, from whence we could perceive if

there was anything to attract our attention on either shore.

The Volga has an evil reputation for swarms of mosquitoes, but the cabin was pretty free from them, every open window being fitted with a machine in zink, resembling a sloping chimney-pot, closed in by a net of fine wire, which could be turned at will so as to catch the breeze—a great advantage; and we had thus plenty of fresh air, without being devoured.

The afternoon we spent in the small deck cabin. The little Armenians built card houses, while their mother—the soul of composure and good-temper—spent half her time in dosing gently. The banks of the broad river were not altogether unpleasing. Sloping to the water, they were clothed with a fringe of brush-wood, out of which rose many a formidable pair of horns, the owners being hidden by the scrub. Shortly before the dinner-hour the bill of fare was brought to Monsieur, and we waited to see what he had chosen. First came cabbage soup, followed by a small piece of boiled meat, from which the soup had probably been made. This he divided into five tiny portions, the *bonne* dining with them, and the scanty repast concluded with a dish of rice. We discovered, however, that the gentleman bought

many things on shore, and noticed that the family did not turn to the image before eating, as Russians would have done.

When the sun began to sink, the air on the upper deck was very refreshing, and, as it was on the point of disappearing, some Tartars, in picturesque costume, stealing quietly up, spread their carpets, and turning towards Mecca, prayed fervently, sometimes standing upright, with hands clasped to the bosom, at others prostrating themselves to the earth. The Mussulman has no false shame in praying openly, and confessing his religion—on the contrary, he glories in it; his inward eyes are fixed on another world, which he seems to realize, and he makes his religion a part of his every-day life.

The boatmen on the Volga are fond of singing very peculiar airs, more like chaunts than melodies. These, we were told, consisted of verses without end, and related to histories of battles, and encounters with pirates, who were formerly numerous, and exceedingly ferocious, on this river; but happily the introduction of steam has put an end to their depredations. The mate pointed out an old sailor on board who in his youth had served on board a boat which was attacked. Many lives were lost, the merchandise stolen, and he

himself, badly wounded, escaped only by swimming to the shore, which he reached with difficulty.

It was nearly dark when we got to Samara, the most easterly point we reached in Russia, and from which twelve hours of water navigation would have placed us at Orenburg, on the river Ural. Samara is an important town, trading in grain and tallow, besides which its mineral springs are much resorted to by invalids. It is also famous for Kumyss, or fermented mare's milk, said to be a sovereign remedy in consumptive cases. On the shore there was quite a respectable market, with cold roast fowls and ducks, pickles, salted fruits, grapes, and outlying carts full of melons. We got the Armenian *bonne* to purchase a couple of yellow ones on our account, and were bearing them off to our cabin, when we met the captain, who begged that we would not eat them, as they were sure to give us cholera. Depositing them in a safe place, we returned to the shore, for the scene was very amusing, and the heaped-up fruit a pretty sight. The Armenian lady was taking a promenade, and on our making signs that we were very hot, she pointed to the river, and asked, through the *bonne*, why we did not take off our clothes and go in. "Nobody would take

any notice of us, and it was perfectly safe!" Fancy the British matron undressing upon the animated shore, and taking an airy dip in the Volga! It was enough to make one's hair stand on end with horror.

CHAPTER II.

Saratoff—Kriloff's Early Days—The Cathedral—Annual Visitation of the Vladka, or Bishop—The Kurgis—Woes of the Mate—Scene in the Second Cabin—Dealings with a Pedlar on Board—The Captain's description of Astrakhan—The Calmucks—Kamyschin—Old Believers—Calmuck Fellow-passengers—Attempts to unite the Volga and the Don—Tsaritsyn—Purchase of Photographs—Solitary Steppes—A Calmuck Palace—Calmuck Settlements.

ON the fourth morning of our voyage, we reached Saratoff, a flourishing town upon the western steppes, where Peter the Great spent some time previous to his war with the Porte. Whilst there he had an interview with Agaka Khan, a Calmuck chief, with whom he made a treaty to supply him with ten thousand men, who were to join him on the shores of the Caspian. It was here, also, that Kriloff spent many of his eccentric early days, studying "the black

people" and the animal life which he depicted so well. He loved the Volga, spending hours each day upon its banks, and when driven away by the mosquitoes, would climb the bell-tower, on the lofty summit of which he could indulge in undisturbed slumber. Saratoff now contains a population of seventy thousand souls, and is a place of considerable trade.

Long before the town was visible we caught sight of the great balloon-shaped dome of its cathedral, which appeared to be suspended in the air. Determined to visit this church, we stepped on shore as soon as the boat stopped, crossed a piece of waste ground thick with dust, and took our way up a wide, forlorn street, with a raised causeway of mud on one side, which, however, was broken down in so many places, that we preferred descending into the road, raising clouds as we picked our way with kilted skirts. Every walk we took cost us an hour's hard work when we returned to our cabin. A tremendous burst of bells left us in no doubt as to the position of the cathedral. It was evidently a Treryan, which indicated a church *fête* and the presence of some high dignity, a bishop or archbishop being always received by such an ecclesiastical salute. A sharp turn conducted us to the steps leading to the principal door of

the church, which we reached just in time to witness the arrival of a chariot drawn by four steaming horses ridden by postilions. It was the Vladka, or bishop, making his annual visitation, and on such an occasion he must proceed to the church before entering any house. He was a dignified gentleman, clad in an ample robe of violet silk, with a large cope cut in points, on each of which there hung suspended a little silver bell. On his bosom he bore a sparkling cross of diamonds and amethysts, suspended by a broad flat chain curiously worked in gold; his long grisled locks mingled with a soft beard of the purest white; he had a high and ample forehead, deep-set eyes, and an intelligent countenance. Slowly he mounted the steps, followed by a train of popes, deacons, readers, sacristans, and choir-boys, a goodly and imposing suite; and with solemn steps proceeded to a raised platform in the body of the church. The latter might be about two yards and a half square, and on it was placed a seat and reading-desk covered with crimson velvet and gold fringe, and in many parts embroidered with the Panagia, or Greek cross.

The service commenced with some very harmonious chaunting, and then began the toilette of the Vladka. He was arrayed by two sacris-

tans, or perhaps readers; his purple robes were removed, and, first, the alb was put on—a frock with large sleeves; then rich cuffs trimmed with lace were added, and an embroidered belt, afterwards a stole, and last an upper frock without sleeves, the chasubel. Each article was kissed and signed with the cross before it was put on; appropriate verses from the Psalms were chaunted during each stage of the toilette, the bishop standing the while as immovable as a lay figure. From time to time the clamour made by the bells was positively deafening, but at intervals the singing was very sweet. We had to turn and go all too soon; even as it was we were met by a breathless sailor, who had been despatched in hot haste to fetch as back; and when we regained the ship we thought it best to slink to our cabin, and avoid an immediate interview with the captain.

Near Saratoff the black soil ends, and the western steppes become barren and solitary, the only remaining signs of human life being on the eastern side. As we hugged the sandy shore, we saw bands of Kurgis, with long strings of camels. The Kurgis claim to be descended from the Khans of Kazan, and the princes of the Golden Horde. They are tall, wild, skin-clad

men, and have the dower of an evil reputation. They range the steppes from the Chinese wall to the Don, breed camels, drive flocks, drink fermented mare's milk, own no law but their own, and are accused of stealing children to sell. We spent the greater part of the morning in listening to the woes of the mate, who declared himself a very ill-used man. The captain, he said, left him to arrange all the quarrels on board, and these were not a few, for no station was reached without some dispute as to the fare, or attempt to avoid payment. He was tired to death of the Volga, but was too well paid to think of leaving his situation, although he seemed to envy his poorer brother, who was in the Black Sea service. And, certainly, life, as he described it from the beginning of October until the following May, must have been sufficiently dreary. The company's vessels are docked at some place with an utterly unpronounceable name—between Saratoff and Astrakhan—and there he and two or three other men had to live the whole of the long, cold, dark Winter, visiting the ships daily to see that all was in order, their only comfort being a small library, which they contrived to set up between them. We asked if we were likely to get any malachite at Astrakhan. The mate thought

not, but added, "There is a pedlar who lives on board—I will go and see if he has got any, as soon as my turn comes to leave the deck. We are obliged to keep a good look-out here, for the river splits into two great arms, which unite further on, having formed islands and sand-banks. One of the company's vessels had got aground the previous Autumn, and it could not be got off until the following May. The Volga in this place was from four to five miles wide; in Winter it spreads to ten or twelve, and has been known to flood thirty miles of country. The mate described the approach of Winter as being very tempestuous, and it frequently happens, when a violent wind is opposed to the swift current, that rafts, sailing vessels, and even steam tugs are lost.

We waited with impatience until we could hear news of the pedlar, who turned up at last, but having come down the Kama from Siberia in the early Summer, and lived ever since on board the boat, most of his stock was by this time sold. The Armenians were asked to join the party, and we all descended into the second cabin, which to our surprise was full of people whom we had not noticed on deck. Seats there were none, but round the chamber a sloping platform was raised, and on it were slumbering

a variety of folks, in coats of sheep and bear-skins and cow-hides, each individual possessing a big square pillow in a patchwork case. There was also a general odour of grease and pickles, but as the lower order of Russians seldom smoke, we were spared that addition. The pedlar was established in a corner, stretched at full length upon the cabinet which contained his goods. Declaring that it was almost cleared out, he drew forth nevertheless some malachite ornaments, as well as specimens of crystal and Siberian stones; but he had no lapis lazuli. We bought two long strings of malachite beads, together with some buttons and a buckle of the same material, as well as a seal of smoked crystal, in the form of the Russian *poud*, a weight with a handle; and the Armenian lady purchased a very beautiful deep yellow topaz. His stock, however, was nearly at an end, and he was preparing to ascend the Kama and lay in stones for the following Spring.

The next day, the fifth of our voyage, we were to reach Tsaritsyn, to which place our tickets were taken; and when the captain came up for his chai, we took the opportunity of telling him that we intended to go down to Astrakhan and return with the boat to Tsaritsyn and asked if we might be allowed to sleep on board

during the night the ship lay off Astrakhan. He was not a little astonished, but cordially assented to our retaining our cabin. A Frenchman would have shrugged his shoulders, and put the notion down to English eccentricity; but our German pondered over it, and at last observed that he had only once before had English women on board, and they were two ladies going through Persia to join their husbands in India; but we, he said, were not going to India, and certainly had no husbands in Astrakhan. We laughed, and told him that we liked the rest on board the boat, that it amused us to see the steppes, the various races which inhabited them, the herds of cattle, and the strange river craft floating by; besides which, we added, we had a great desire to see some Calmucks.

Relieved in mind as to our motives, the captain launched out into a description of Astrakhan. In Summer he declared that the heat, the dust, and, above all, the dogs, were almost unbearable. In Winter the said dogs are caught and made to work hard, being harnessed to light sledges and employed in bringing dried fish and caviare over the slightly frozen water, which will bear no heavier animal; but in Summer they are let loose to cater for themselves and follow their own devices, and are

far from amiable. In Winter, too, the raw cold is great, and the mud so thick that the inhabitants are obliged to walk about mounted on pattens a foot high. One night he and his family were *en route* to an evening party, when suddenly the carriage sunk into a hole, and was overturned, the whole family, in evening costume, having to scramble out as well as they could. The mud, he assured us, reached to his knees, and as to Madame's plight, it was only to be described by a shrug and an appealing look up into the sky. In Winter, again, the town is dangerous, on account of the frequent assassinations and robberies—scarcely a night passing without some one being killed. With respect to fruits, grapes and melons appear to be splendid, the far-famed melons of Astrakhan being forwarded to all parts of Russia.

Our good captain regretted much that his family were away from home, and that his house was being painted, else he would have been delighted to have provided us with beds on shore. His house had some very peculiar name, and at his door stood two mandarins with umbrellas over their heads. The why and the wherefore he endeavoured to explain, but we lost the point of the joke, as it turned upon the play between a German and a Russian sen-

tence. The wine he declared to be excellent when fresh, but it is so carelessly made that it will not keep.

Calmuck is the Russian name of the people whom we so much wished to see, but they are really Olots, and belong to the Mongolian family. They are divided into four tribes—the Dzungar, the Durbet, the Torgot, and the Khosot; and these again into two sub-divisions. The two first tribes are occupants of their original locality, their occupancy being to the north of the great wall, on the drainage of the Hoangho, where they are wholly subject to China. The two latter are the Calmucks of the Volga, separated from their brethren of the interior of Asia, brought into contact with Europeans, and christened in Russia by the name of Calmuck. In the Czar's dominions they number at least 200,000 souls, and are a people not easy to manage. Twice they have taken pet, and returned to their original locality, leaving vast districts uninhabited. In 1771, unable to endure the cruelty with which they were treated by the Russian *employés*, they fought their way through all the hostile tribes intervening between them and the Celestial Empire, and the whole nation arrived safely, under the wing of the Emperor of China, who

afforded them protection, and gave them great tracts of land for the pasture of their flocks and herds. The ambassador of the Empress Catherine, who had been despatched to desire the surrender of the fugitive tribe, and demand a renewal of treaties between the two countries, received the following answer from the court of Pekin: "Let your mistress learn to keep old treaties, and then it will be time to apply for new ones." The Russian government feel it necessary now to treat these nomad tribes very gently. They are allowed to retain their own laws and religion, and are ruled by their own Grand-Duke, who is received at Moscow with the honours due to his rank. His two little boys are attached to a military school there, and dress in Cossack costume. The Calmucks never mix blood with the Tartars, but sometimes intermarry with the Don Cossacks, who come of Ugrian stock; and then, strange to say, hideous as is the Calmuck, the union produces some of the most beautiful people in Europe, for many of the inhabitants of Circassia are of this mixed breed.

The evening was closing in when we stopped to give the engine its supper at Kamyschin (one hundred miles from Saratoff). This place was strongly fortified in the middle of the seven-

teenth century, the works being conducted by an Englishman, a Captain Baillie. Formerly a large force was kept there, in order to suppress the Cossack pirates, who committed the greatest atrocities. In the time of Peter the Great, Kamyschin was full of Old Believers, who rose against and murdered those inhabitants who shared the country, in compliance with the Czar's command; and although not so powerful now as formerly, they are quite as disagreeable and obstinate. In the sixteenth century an attempt was made near this spot to connect the waters of the Volga and the Don; but it failed. Perhaps in those days the higher level of the Volga, three hundred feet, might have been an impediment which it required the skill of modern science to overcome. Peter himself was equally unsuccessful in a subsequent undertaking lower down the river, which appears strange, inasmuch as the streams at the point he fixed upon are less than fifty miles apart, being simply separated by a sandstone steppe of that extent; besides which there are two tributaries, the Kaspovka and the Laspa, which would have greatly facilitated the union of the two rivers. A Captain Perry was employed to effect the communication; and a certain John Dean writes to some English peer: "His Majesty has ordered

forty thousand men to be raised, and materials to be provided for supplying the same. He promises to do it in five years, although I believe it can be done in two. The Czar may then carry his ships from the Caspian to the Black Sea." But the hopes so dear to Peter's heart were not destined to be fulfilled.

Whilst we were meditating upon the Czar's disappointment, the captain's head appeared upon a level with the deck. He came to inform us that he had just shipped five Calmucks, two men and three women. We scrambled down the ladder-stairs, anxious to see the addition to our floating population, and were gratified by beholding a group of the strangest beings we had ever seen. They were most peculiar both in features and dress, and not at all what we had expected, thinking to have seen fine athletic people, with ugly faces. But these were small in stature, and what struck us most was their exceedingly mean appearance. Could these dwarfs be the Amazons who, Dr. Clark in his travels assures us, outstrip their male companions in the race, and ride about with their dinner under their saddles, in the shape of a raw beef-steak, pommelled until it is tender, and then eaten *au naturel*? These women did not look as if they could trot along on a donkey. Both

males and females had low, bulging foreheads, high cheek-bones, with small eyes, far apart, which appeared to have no lids to cover them; flat faces, with broad noses; wide mouths—mere slits, with scarcely any lips, and huge ears. Their coarse long black hair was braided into tails, and shone with grease; and their dress, especially that of the women, was most peculiar. They were clad in short robes of some kind of grey stuff, with patches of red cloth or cotton sewn on to them, forming strange patterns, somewhat resembling letters. It is possible that these designs were really intended to represent letters. The Calmucks are very superstitious, and so fond of amulets that they will at any time give a sheep for a few lines of writing. They had well-worn ornaments of silver round their arms and necks. The men had great bosses of silver on each side of the breast, nearly as large as small teacups. The whole group were so dirty and ugly that we were quite dismayed, much to the captain's amusement, who laughed and said, "Well, ladies, I hope you are satisfied at having seen the Calmucks. However," he added, "they are not all as bad as these. Some of the girls are rather pretty when quite young." Nevertheless we lay down on our sofas (for it could

scarcely be called going to bed) with the feeling that Calmucks were not altogether what they ought to be.

On this river voyage nothing was pleasanter than to wake in the night, hear the water bubbling, and turn round to go to sleep again, with a perfect feeling of security. We had to be stirring early on the fifth morning of our journey, for the captain had promised to take us on shore and introduce us to a photographer, who had some curious photographs of the people and country. Tsaritsyn is a town which has played a somewhat important part on the banks of the Volga. The noted pirate, Stenka Razin, took possession of it, and it was plundered more than once before Peter visited it in the beginning of the eighteenth century, on which occasion he harangued its inhabitants, with whom he was not perfectly satisfied. "Take my stick," he said, "and defend yourselves with it." Then, presenting them with his cap, he bid them take care of it, "for," he added, "as no one dares to take this cap off the head of Majesty, so shall no one dare to turn you out of Tsaritsyn."

The Armenian lady went on shore along with us, and we climbed up a terribly dusty road into a broad open space laid out as a

pleasure-ground, where we waited whilst the captain went to hunt up his friend the photographer. Sitting down on a bench, we surveyed the scene, which was not enlivening. Every plant, every green leaf, lay white under a thick coating of dust; the poor things could not breathe, and were withering away. Then we straggled off and visited the large, white-washed, uninteresting church, crowned with a huge green copper dome. The only speck of light which illumined the place was the cross on its summit, which flashed in the early sunlight. We could not help feeling thankful that our lot had not been cast at Tsaritsyn. It was some time before the captain returned, and when he did he was infinitely disgusted at having found the artist in bed asleep and unwilling to wake. We, secretly thinking that he was very wise not to rise too early in Tsaritsyn, went on, however, to his studio, and there chose nearly a dozen curious pictures of the Volga and the inhabitants of its steppes. The larger ones were very dear, four of a medium size being five francs each, but we were glad to have them. We got also a portrait of the Grand-Duchess, who is represented dressed in some sort of silk or satin robe, fitting tight round the neck, and flowing

down to the feet. Her head is covered by a three-cornered cap, stuck on in a jaunty way, all on one side, and two long tails of braided hair are turned over her shoulders. She had the oblique bald Calmuck eye, but appeared to be by no means bad-looking. (Unfortunately these photographs were afterwards stolen.) We procured, besides, photographs of her two little sons in Cossack costume, as well as some skin-clad Kurgis, and a group of Buddhist priests. The latter, apparently, when of the highest rank, wear high-pointed caps like extinguishers, along with richly-embroidered silk dresses, cut straight and reaching to the heels, resembling the robe of a Mandarin. They formed a curious collection, and, whilst carrying them off, we felt that we had not got our dusting for nothing. Our Calmucks on board the steamer proved to be not one bit better-looking in full daylight than they had appeared to be in the gloaming, and their skins resembled tanned leather. We posted ourselves near, hoping to hear them converse, but a few harsh guttural words were all they uttered.

About twelve o'clock we stopped at a little grey town with an unpronounceable name. The captain had a spite against this place, which had recently petitioned the Volga Company to

take compassion upon them, and stop at their little port; but it so happened that, during the serious political troubles which had taken place when the serf-emancipation question was first mooted, government had sent him to make inquiries upon the subject. He was uncivilly received by the inhabitants, who were mostly Old Believers, and when he asked for some meat for his dinner, they were so furious that his mission alone saved him from personal ill-usage. "Did he call himself a Christian, and ask for meat during a fast of the Church?"—and for a fortnight he could get nothing but black bread, with vegetables and fish cooked in oil of hemp-seed. More than half the days which make the sum of a Russian's year are days of fast, during which he must abstain from all animal food, under the head of which are reckoned milk, butter, eggs, even fish-oil and caviare; and a distinct set of kitchen-utensils must be used. During his fortnight's sojourn, our poor captain was half-starved, and has regarded the place ever since with horror. In great towns, the members of the Greco-Russian Church manage to procure a more liberal diet. They have a respectable *soupe maigre* made of cabbage, onions, and potatoes, little patties of minced carrots, fried pumpkins,

a great variety of jams and salted fruits, and a very popular dish called kirsel, which consists of potato-flour boiled in kvas and honey. They also take a great deal of coffee, into which they introduce poppy-seeds.

Not a single sign of human life did we see during the whole day, but great herds of horned cattle and droves of horses, cormorants and wild fowl, gave some appearance of life to the solitary steppes. There was not even a village at the station where we stopped to take in wood in the evening. A few sheds fringed the shore, and there was a kind of booth, where were sold little stone bottles which contained some sort of liquor. We had hoped they might have been filled with soda-water, for so vast a quantity had been consumed on board that the stock had run out, and the Volga water not being pleasant to drink, our only resource was tea and lemon, a beverage which we grew to like exceedingly. Wine was probably to be had, but nobody drank anything stronger than chai. At this station we parted with our Calmucks, who were probably bound for a little village, the houses of which clustered upon the eastern bank further on, looking like a collection of gigantic mushrooms. These cabins are, in fact, nothing but big baskets, covered with felt, supported by

a pole in the middle; and they are not unfrequently thrown down by one of the sudden whirlwinds to which the steppes are subject. Occasionally they are carried away into the river, when, however, they float, and are soon recovered, dried, and stuck up again. In Winter some are warmly lined with skins, and the inmates indulge in the luxury of carpets and rugs. At night they lie with their heads towards the pole, their bodies radiating from this centre. The Armenian gentleman had evidently something which he wished to communicate to me respecting the Calmucks, and chose the mate as interpreter. The latter hesitated to repeat the anecdote; but the Armenian was so imperative that he had no choice but to obey. I returned a graceful bow, and changed the subject.

We saw more than one little settlement cropping up along the shore before we quitted the upper deck, and the captain warned us to be up early the following morning, if we wished to see the Grand-Duke's palace. As for the people on the lower deck, each day they had grown dirtier and dirtier. Even the comfortable couple were no longer pleasing objects. Sleeping so many nights on the dirty deck and benches had compromised the original purity of Madame's fresh cotton; and as to the rest of the passen-

gers, they had reached their ultimatum, and dirt could no further go.

When morning came we drank our early cup of coffee almost boiling, so anxious were we to see the Calmuck palace. All our little first-class world assembled upon the upper deck, and the general mass of passengers, amounting to above three hundred, were preparing for their exodus, for at twelve o'clock we were to reach Astrakhan. The Calmuck settlements along the eastern steppes were numerous, and as the boat, taking advantage of the swift stream, kept close to the bank, we were able to see the tents distinctly. Some were only felted over at the top, the rings of neatly-executed basket-work which formed the walls being *au jour*. Perhaps these were "houses to let," as we saw no one in them. We could not help wondering if the wicker cabins of our British ancestors by any chance resembled these. It is a simple Calmuck custom to hoist a flag if a dwelling contains a marriageable girl. How gay Belgravia, we thought, would look, if all mammas under similar circumstances hung out their *pavillon*!

At last we came in sight of the Calmuck palace, a very handsome wooden châlet, carved with intricate patterns, and close to the water;

but this abode, it seems, is reserved only for great occasions, the Duke and Duchess preferring to live snugly in a large basket, neatly covered with white felt, erected in the courtyard. A considerable settlement clustered around, and close at hand was a stone-built temple in the Grecian style, with handsome colonnades, the Buddhist place of worship. The captain had visited the interior, and declared that it resembled a Greek church, minus the pictures, the ikonostas being replaced by a platform, on which rested three gilt gods of great size. It seems that formerly the captains of these vessels were able to stop where they pleased, and ours had more than once been the guest of the Calmuck chief, along with the passengers whom he had taken on shore. He described the banquets as being plentiful, but very long, and served with a strange mixture of barbarism and civilization, the guests being confined to the lords of the creation. It was imperative on each to commence with a bumper of brandy, after which champagne flowed abundantly. The Grand Duke was as generous as hospitable, and on one occasion had placed the captain in a considerable dilemma. Much against his will, he had been obliged to accept a cow. There was all the difficulty in the world

to get her on board, there being no landing-place; then there was no fodder—the boat was going up stream, and the poor animal, which was quartered amongst the passengers, had to live upon the cabbages intended for the soup. Another time a gift-horse proved a still more embarrassing present to ship and provide for, as it refused the cabbages, and had to be fed with bread. But great would have been the Calmuck's indignation had his gifts been refused. The Grand-Duke is absolute amongst his people, and can oblige any subject to labour for him without pay.

But we soon left the temple of the ancient worship, and the palace of the Grand-Duke, behind. Our journey, indeed, was like a moving panorama; we had scarcely time to realize a scene before it faded into distance. Two more hours would bring us to Astrakhan, the old Tartar stronghold, against which the sultans had so often marched in vain. It was reserved for John the Terrible to be the first to style himself Czar of Astrakhan, but the town was long disaffected; and a prey to one party after another. Its archbishops, half priests and wholly soldiers, lost their heads, and were roasted, drowned, or promoted to the highest honours, according to the tide of war. A more enlightened policy

brought comparative peace. The Czar Alexis entered into a treaty with the Shah of Persia, and established a trade in silk, with permission to build ships on the Caspian, and trade with the countries beyond. Then its growing prosperity was again checked and clouded by the usurpation of Stenka Razin, who took possession of its Kremlin, and threw its archbishop into the Volga. Under Peter the Great, it flourished once more, and companies were formed to trade with Khiva, Bokhara, Persia, and India; which trade, however, fell off in the succeeding reigns, but is, at the present time, in a comparatively prosperous condition. As many as 1,300 vessels are employed, and grapes, melons, bread, fish, and caviare, are exported to all parts of the Czar's dominions.

Presently the horizon was indented by two great bulbs, which rose above a deep grey line, and Astrakhan was the cry. All was now excitement. Many evidently looked with affection at the domes, under the shadow of which their homes nestled; all were bound to the place by some tie excepting ourselves—we alone were strangers. The captain had endeavoured to persuade us that our best route to the Crimea would be by one of the small steamers which ran from Astrakhan to the Cas-

pian, and over the Caucasus to the sea of Azoff. Caravans were frequently going, but travellers must part with their luggage. That difficulty might have been overcome, but there was a more serious one to encounter. We were late in the season for the Caspian, and fever stalked abroad; so we were prudent, and refused to yield to temptation.

CHAPTER III.

Astrakhan—The Kremlin—The Cathedral—Magnificent Melons—Establishment for the Preparation of Caviare—Curious Species of Marble—A New Set of Passengers—Persians — Calmucks — Bride-catching — Buddhist Temple—The Mussulman's Evening Prayer—Dispute between a Persian and a Russian—Tsaritsyn—The Vauxhall—Variety of Spiders—The Puzzled Cheloveck—A Great Delicacy—The Volga—Crops grown on the Steppes.

ASTRAKHAN has all the appearance of an important town, lying stretched upon the Volga's eastern bank. Its Kremlin, situated upon an elevation, and its huge cathedral, with white crenellated walls, form picturesque objects. In the middle of the town arose another church of considerable size, and along the river there were continuous rows of wooden houses and sheds. There was some appearance of life upon the quays, and great was the outpouring from our ship; such a dragging and pulling

about of bundles and pillows, shubas and tea-pots! The *liuleka* was unswung, to the disgust of its screaming occupant, and the slatternly family, whose luggage was of the smallest, were amongst the first to depart. The comfortable couple packed up their melons, white bread, and caviare with great composure, but they had evidently no children or grand-children to welcome them on shore. The Armenians wafted us—Madame a smiling, Monsieur a stately, adieu. Our ancestors had busied themselves with trowel and mortar at Babel—his had never soiled their hands; our language was gibberish in comparison with the sonorous tones which had awakened the echoes in Paradise. But he was a good-natured gentleman, and desired the mate to say that, if we had time to come up to his house, he should be very happy to welcome us.

Group after group vanished with astonishing rapidity, and at last we were left alone. The captain went on shore, the mate disappeared, the stewardess was nowhere; but in half an hour a perfect saturnalia reigned on board; there was such a scrubbing, such deluges of water, such a collection of mops and pails! We retired to the little deck-cabin, and sat down to write to our relations and friends,

some of whom we knew would rejoice to hear news of us from anywhere, while others would receive our epistles with exclamations of, "Astrakhan! What on earth can have induced them to go to Astrakhan?" And we ourselves could remember the time when we had faint visions of Astrakhan as an unpleasant place half way between Timbuctoo and Kamschatka, a place continually deluged with the innocent blood of slaughtered lambs.

We wrote and wrote, until even our little oasis was invaded, and then we put on our bonnets and went on shore. The dust was something fearful, but we waded through it, and came to a river or canal, which was crowded with flat-bottomed barges, heaped high with water-melons. There were occasional pyramids of the yellow melon, but the pastik, which we disliked so much, was evidently the favourite fruit, and probably the most wholesome. On a good many stalls were scattered about pears and grapes, which were scarcely ripe; there were a few vegetables, and a scanty supply of fish. The spot was evidently a market, but not a gay one.

Crossing the bridge, we got into wide dreary thoroughfares, with large dull houses on either side, amongst which we perceived the captain's abode, distinguished by the two mandarins

with their umbrellas. A very large building in red brick we rightly supposed to be the Gostinnoi, but for some reason or other it was shut up. Perhaps it might be the habit of the townspeople to sleep during the middle of the day. On we went, skirting a high embattled wall, protected by a deep ditch; and, passing under a low arched gate, advanced into the Kremlin, a large open square, sloping down hill. It was enclosed by crenellated walls of great strength, with tall watch-towers of Tartar architecture. All was perfectly solitary—not a human being but ourselves was exposed to the rays of the burning sun; and we too were glad to seek refuge from them in the huge cathedral. The screen and pillars were decked with many an ancient picture—here a Byzantine Virgin and Child, looking grimly through the curves cut in the golden plaques; there some military saint, who had fought a good fight in his day. There were also ancient half-effaced frescoes of martyrdoms. One side of the building was occupied by a representation of the seven councils. Old as this Kremlin looked, its walls probably dated only from the middle of the fifteenth century, for when John the Terrible took possession of the Khanship of Astrakhan, he fired the town. It

is sad to think how these frequent fires have destroyed the relics of ancient art in Russia.

Leaving the Kremlin to its wonted solitude, we crossed open places, white with dust, glaring with heat, and reached the more modern cathedral. It had a glittering Ikonostas, bedecked with saints, arrayed in all the brilliancy of modern colours. The building was lofty and handsome, but it was so like many another church that we were not tempted to remain in it long; and were moreover so tired of pearls, sapphires, and embroidered robes that we declined to visit the sacristy. Recrossing the bridge, and stopping once more to admire the profuse heaps of melons, we gladly regained our temporary home, and the next two hours were occupied in dusting our clothes and arranging the cabin. By the captain's wish we went over to the one opposite, still keeping, on our return journey, to the cool side of the vessel. But although in size it was the same, and its fittings precisely similar, we never got to feel so much at home in it as we had done in our original quarters. The ship itself, however, was all the more agreeable for the ablutions it had undergone.

As the day wore on, there was a little more appearance of life. After dinner we were to

cross the Volga, land at a point somewhere lower down, and visit one of the great dried fish and caviare establishments. The steamer we were in had conveyed fifteen hundred tons of caviare to Nijni-Novgorod the previous season. The mate was anxious to escort us, but when the time came he could not be spared. We were therefore put in charge of a couple of the sailors, and getting into a good-sized boat, they rowed off at a spanking pace. Though smooth as glass, the water was deep and the stream swift. The opposite bank, some five miles away, was a simple blue line in the distance. The sun was declining, the evening balmy and delightful, and now and then we heard the mournful chaunt of a fisherman, or a distant chorus struck upon our ears. The atmosphere was delightfully clear, and the great curved domes of the rival cathedrals stood out sharply defined against the sky.

We reached our destination only too quickly, and, landing by aid of some very rickety planks, were conducted to the large barn-like establishment. It was not the time of year when the caviare is extracted; but we were shown the machine in which the sturgeon is placed. The fish, having been first cut open and deprived of its head, is subjected to a gentle pressure, the

roe is squeezed out, and the superabundant oil flows into a separate channel. But the operation is delicately performed, so as not to crush the little eggs. A great number of sturgeon are harpooned in Winter, The ice being broken up, they rush to gulp the air, and meet with their fate. We were afterwards conducted into the huge storehouses, in which the fish are salted and dried. They were hung upon racks many tiers deep; and one of the loose boards of the flooring being removed, we perceived that the planks we were walking over concealed layer upon layer of fish, waiting their turn to be packed and sent off to all parts of Russia. It was not a pleasant place—the smell was overpowering, the greasy dirt excessive, and the cold produced by the quantity of salt so great that we felt as if we were in an ice-house, and were thankful to escape into the genial atmosphere outside. The row back, being somewhat against the stream, was not so quickly accomplished; but the evening was delightful. The lingering sunset was reflected in the water, and, where the glow ceased, the sky assumed a hue of the clearest green. The boat was borne by the current some way past the ship, and as we rowed gently back under the shadow of the wooden houses, which appeared to be built upon

piles, we saw the natives disporting themselves in the water with the utmost simplicity.

Arriving on board, we refreshed ourselves with a glass of chai, and, once more quitting the vessel, made our way to the Gostinnoi; but, when we reached it, all was silent as the grave. Proceeding a little further, we turned into the Kremlin. It was perfectly solitary, and while the moon, flooded some parts with silver, others were cast into the deepest shade. A feeling of insecurity crept over us, and, turning again into the deserted streets, a visible danger presented itself. There were no lights, and savage dogs abounded. We heard them fighting and quarrelling in all directions, and every now and then we were greeted by a snarl from some dark corner, in which more than once we caught sight of a pair of glowing eyes. My companion, more courageous than myself, whispered to me to tread firmly and come on; but we were both frightened, and stumbled constantly over dust-heaps and into holes, trusting that we were in the right road. More than once I was tempted to turn and fly in another direction, but my companion grasped my arm, and on we went. It was a joyful moment when we caught sight of the coarse paper lanterns which illuminated the stalls near the

bridge, and we were delighted to find ourselves safe on board ship. The mate, however, told us that we had committed a great imprudence, and ought not to have gone out alone, adding that we might feel very thankful to have been neither robbed nor worried.

Although we were not to start next day until four o'clock in the afternoon, we did not again go on shore, the dogs and the dust being too much for us. We therefore saw nothing of the "obscure antiquities," the relics of a Turkish, a Mongolian, and even of an earlier period, which we had read of. The captain declared that Astrakhan possessed nothing more ancient than the Kremlin. We were disappointed, however, at not being able to procure a specimen of the marble found in the neighbourhood. It is very curious, being composed of a conglomeration of tubular shells, about half an inch in length, which, until they are examined, look like a collection of little sticks, a bright lilac colour, and very pretty.*

By ten o'clock the passengers began to assemble. They were altogether a different class from those we had brought down from Nijni,

* We afterwards got a large piece of this marble in Rome, and found that it took a beautiful polish.

being well-to-do Armenians, Turks, and Jews. Some wore long frock-coats, the seams of which were ornamented with gold braid; others had straight-cut garments, fringed with little tassels. Large hands, not too clean, and made more conspicuous by glittering rings, were universal. Some of the stones they wore were to be coveted—brilliants which flashed in the sun, soft blue turquoises, and some kind of red stone which had as many hues as an opal reflected in it. These were the first-class passengers. Then several Persians came on board, dressed in tight-fitting silk gowns, with hanging sleeves and girdles of cashmere. They were beetle-browed men, with a melancholy cast of countenance, and an appearance of bad health, their large eyes being set deep in their heads, and surrounded by black rims. Their shape was very peculiar; they were all angles, and perfectly straight, from the armpits downwards, looking utterly unbendable, and their conical lamb-skin head-dress made them appear taller than they really were. There were also deck-passengers, with cargoes of early fruit from the shores of the Caspian. The numbers of small boxes, containing grapes, formed a heap which in size rivalled the stack of wood taken in for the day's consumption. At the

extreme end of the vessel were a knot of Calmucks, not one whit handsomer than those we had previously seen, although, judging from the number of their silver ornaments, they were probably of a richer class. They had all sorts of odd bits of silk about them, and their long coarse plaits of hair, which hung down nearly to their knees, were tied with bows of metallic ribbon. On observing them narrowly, we came to the conclusion that it was the absence, or rather, perhaps, the imperfect development of the eyelid which gave such an unpleasant, vacant expression to their faces, the eye appearing to gaze out of a slit, with no visible rim. We asked the mate whether the practice of bride-catching, as described by Dr. Clark, still prevailed amongst them; and he said that, having lived so many years almost surrounded by a Calmuck population, he had often witnessed the ceremony. The girl, arrayed in all the ornaments and finery which can be collected, is mounted, and rides off at full speed. She is allowed a fair start, but if the pursuing lover catches her, he becomes her husband. The Calmucks are divided into hordes, and no man can seek a wife in his own horde. The captain further added that, although professed Buddhists, they were exceedingly superstitious.

They practise magic, and serpent-worship was to be found amongst them.

We waited to see Astrakhan fade into the sky-line before we descended to breakfast. Fortunately there were no first-class lady passengers on board, so we retained possession of the cabin as a dining-room. But, alas! when we returned to the deck, we found the little glass saloon, which we had shared so amicably with the handsome Armenians, full of dirty strangers, who were smoking and spitting in all directions. Amongst them sat a tall, thin young man, Russian, from his lank hair, yellow-brown eyes, and profusion of jewelry. He looked like a gentleman, but had an unpleasant, supercilious air. His companion was an elderly man, respecting whose nationality we were puzzled, but as he had a curved nose, long brown eyes, and displayed little bits of gold, with here and there a tassel, we set him down to be an Armenian. The cabin, however, was no pleasant place, so, in spite of a hot sun and a fiery funnel, we sat down upon the upper deck. A quantity of large green melons were stored away under the seats, a private speculation of the captain's, who, it appeared, has the right of conveying a certain number free of charge. The original cost of one of these melons was three halfpence;

thirty sous each is the ordinary charge of their conveyance to Nijni-Novgorod, where they sell for two francs, while in St. Petersburg three francs is a fair price; so that the captain probably made a good thing of his speculation in fruit.

The voyage from Astrakhan to Nijni from eight to nine days, unless the wind be adverse, when the labour of ascending the stream is much greater. We quietly ploughed our way along, keeping close to the eastern shore, and passing many a basket-work village, whose female inhabitants were squatted at the doors of their tents, and appeared to be occupied in grinding corn between two stones. Scarcely any men were visible, most of them being probably employed in tending cattle at a distance. We passed once more the Buddhist temple, and heard the sound of bells, which are rung by way of letting the god know that a congregation is assembled. The royal white felt-covered tents were basking in the sunshine, and a lady in flowing garments, with two little children, was standing upon the broad wooden balcony of the Châlet Palace. We could not distinguish her features, but she was presumed to be the Grand Duchess.

As the hours passed the steppes became more

and more solitary, and at last all signs of human occupation ceased. As the sun declined, the rich glow of its slanting rays bathed the mighty stream in gold, and tinged the steppes with amber. Great herds of horses came down to drink, and cool their dusty hoofs in the shallow creeks; and occasionally we disturbed a number of white pelicans, fishing for their supper; but there are very few wild birds on the banks of the Volga. As darkness drew near, the good Mussulmans stole quietly up on deck, spread their carpets, and prayed fervently; and then the sky became streaked with green, the stars came out, and our chimney sent forth splendid showers of sparks, which lighted up the trail of foam we left behind. We sat long into the night, for it was our last evening upon the broadest, swiftest, and longest of European rivers, and we were very sorry that our nine days of quiet happiness were drawing to an end.

Early on deck next morning, in order to enjoy the fresh air, we found there both captain and mate, who fell into a discussion respecting the accommodation to be found at Tsaritsyn, the Vauxhall, it was agreed, being the only place where we were likely to obtain shelter. The Vauxhall, it appeared, was the railway station,

and we were horrified to hear that we should be detained there for two nights, and nearly two days, which was really hard, considering that the steppes from Tsaritsyn to Kalatch are only fifty miles across. We might have walked it in the time, had it not been for our luggage. There was a passenger train only twice a week. Whilst we were discussing this inconvenience, the mate was sent for to settle a dispute which had arisen between a Persian and a Russian. The former, it seems, are very quarrelsome and ill-tempered.

"Only this morning," the mate said, on his return, "I had to interfere between the same parties, the Persian being then violently enraged with the Russian for sitting down upon his fruit-boxes. I settled that matter by declaring that the boxes took up so much room, and were so strong, that they might very well be sat upon. Just now, again, I have been to hear the Russian complained of because he was standing on the boxes; and," he added, "before many hours are past the Persian will come to say that his enemy is kneeling upon his property. And so they will go on until we reach Nijni-Novgorod."

The sun had sunk below the far distant horizon by the time we reached Tsaritsyn. The

mate prepared to take us up to the Vauxhall. We bade a sorrowful farewell to the kind captain, and casting a parting glance round the good ship in which we had passed so many happy days, we were ourselves placed upon one drosky, while a second was obtained for the friendly mate, who took charge of our luggage. No signs of a road, however, could we discover. If such an accommodation existed, it was completely concealed by the dust, which lay so deep that it was really fearful to think of encountering it. There proved to be rather more, too, than the usual amount of concealed holes, and as we bumped up and down, the dust rose in clouds, which set us both coughing. Through it the mate loomed big; and our luggage, in the midst of which, for want of a seat, he was standing, appeared to have swelled out to double its original bulk. Holding on with all our might, we mounted a steep bank, and got into a kind of street—at least, there were a few houses scattered at intervals along the long stretch of level ground to which we had climbed. Groups of children were amusing themselves in the loose and dirty soil; and on hearing wheels a few sickly-looking women came to the doors of their cabins, to see us pass. It was a depressing scene, and it appeared to be a

wretched place. At last we reached the Vaux-hall, and were led down a long dark passage to our quarters, the common waiting-room, which we should have to share with any first or second-class women passengers who, like ourselves, might have forty-eight hours to wait for their train.

Our hearts sank within us when we looked round the chamber into which we were ushered. It was lofty and large, with three great windows, in which half the panes of glass were either broken or altogether wanting. The furniture consisted of a greasy black leather couch, two benches covered with the same material, a couple of straw-bottom chairs, and a large deal table, marked all over with the stains of many a rough meal To make matters worse, an evil smell issued from a door in the corner. An oil lamp was suspended from the ceiling, but it was slowly expiring, smothered under the accumulation of insects which poured in myriads through the broken windows. A more dismal place it was impossible to conceive —so dirty, so squalid, and so dreary; and in this room we were to sleep for two nights, and take our meals! It seemed to be an eternity of time; and so depressed were we, we felt ready to cry. Why had we ever come to Russia?

However, we had to rouse ourselves, be hospitable, and invite our companion to have some chai, which he went out to order; and presently three glasses, brimming with the clear fragrant liquid, were placed upon the table by the lankiest, greasiest chelovek we had ever seen. Our friend was melancholy, and so were we. We drank our chai in solemn silence, and then ordered some more, and felt rather better; after which the mate got up to take leave, as his time was up. How we longed to return with him to his comfortable boat! He told us that he had begged the people at the restaurant to take all possible care of us, and assured us that we were at least in a place of perfect safety. He then made his adieux; and when he and his rough pilot-coat vanished into the dark night, we felt as if we had parted from a friend of long standing.

If we had been naturalists, we might have consoled ourselves by observing the wonderful collection of spiders which ran along the walls, and hung by innumerable threads from the ceiling, reminding us of the terrific insects which bob up and down on the Paris boulevards. Amongst them there were specimens with speckled yellow bellies, great black hairy things; others with fierce red eyes, which curled

themselves up into crumpled balls when they heard us approach, pretending to be dead. The half transparent grey variety were there in legions; and as for gnats and flies, if we had possessed a broom, we might have swept them away by the bushel. My companion, having drawn one of the benches into the middle of the room, covered it over with linen, leaving me to hunt up our other resources, such as candles, a pair of wooden candlesticks, a spirit-lamp, cups, spoons, two basins, a couple of air-cushions, and, greatest treasure of all, a small Abyssinian filter, with which we immediately began to operate upon a bottle of dirty water. We made a useful addition to our night toilettes by bringing to light a couple of large muslin bags, relics of bygone finery, which would scarcely have looked out of place in a Swedish museum; and wrapping ourselves carefully up in them, we prepared to take what rest was in store for us. Dr. Johnson informed the world that time may be "tedious," but it cannot be "long." And somehow or other even the hardness of the couches, with other grievances, did not prevent the night from being driven away by the grey dawn, and then the Summer sun, with the mild warmth of early morning, streamed into the

room, and through the windows came the sweet air to cheer and refresh us.

Tired with dancing and twirling all night long, the gnats had gone to sleep upon the ceiling, and the spiders had retreated into the shade, ready to pounce upon the heedless flies, who were executing wonderful figures in mid-air. Delightful thought, too, our first night was over, and when we lighted our lamp, heard the water bubbling, and made two ample bowls of steaming chai, with fragrant slices of lemon floating on the top, and plenty of sugar, we felt almost cheerful. Opening the door to take in our boots, we perceived that it led into the common room of the station, at the end of which stood the buffet of the restaurant, well supplied with tall bottles of vodka and other liquors, over which presided a stout, unpleasant-looking woman. Making her understand that we were in want of something, she hailed the chelovek, who, at last perceiving that water was required, vanished, and returned with a large jug full. But our difficulties were not yet over. Making signs that he must bring some sort of tub or basin, he retreated with a puzzled air, and in a short time returned with a good-sized brass basin, but, alas! so begrimed by grease and dirt that, after a consultation as

to whether or not we might be able to wash without touching the sides, we gave it up, and performed what ablutions we could in the slop-basins. After a short time came a rap at the door. "The brass vessel is wanted in the gentleman's waiting-room," said the waiter; and we afterwards discovered that it served for the use of the whole establishment, the people who kept the restaurant as well as the visitors. We did not ask for it a second time.

Whilst breakfast was preparing, we set about to restore order to our forlorn apartment, and the dusters which were amongst our travelling treasures proved invaluable, as towels were not to be had. Our breakfast was spread upon a woefully dirty tablecloth, which covered one half of the board. The cutlets and sterlet were good enough, if we could have dismissed from our minds all idea of the people who had prepared them. Setting the filter and Etna to work, we made a brew of golden chai, which was the pleasantest part of our repast. The town was about a mile and a half away, and it had been our intention to visit it after breakfast; but the weather had changed. Great gusts of wind shook the windows, and a darkness like that of a London fog obscured the sun. This was occasioned by the clouds of fine

sand and dust which were raised by the gale. Had it been Winter the atmosphere would have been further thickened with minute particles of snow, and it is this description of storm—called a *bouras*—which renders the steppes so dangerous for travellers during that season. There was no resource but to unpack our books. My companion had her never-failing pencil, and, but for the flies, we might have been tolerably comfortable. These, however, were so troublesome that it was impossible to read, or obtain a moment's peace. At last I ensconced myself in my muslin bag, which, fastened round the waist, was sufficiently large to give ample play to the arms; and thus covered up, reading became practicable. Although slowly, the hours did pass, the only event of the day being the alarming invasion of our premises by a woman. We sadly feared that she, too, had come prepared to await the morrow's train, for she deliberately took her bonnet off, placed her bundle upon a bench, and then, turning slowly round, fixed her gaze upon me, on whom it steadily rested, her countenance assuming a ludicrous expression of astonishment. Under the shelter of my bag I sat perfectly still and silent, until at last our visitor turned away, hastily resumed her bonnet, snatched up her bundle, made a

hasty exit, and we saw her no more. We had a hearty laugh, my companion declaring that I had been taken for a lunatic in a strait-waistcoat. Whatever the reason might be, the result was highly satisfactory, as we were again left to enjoy our quarters, such as they were, alone. We dined at five o'clock, and were served with a tureen of the national *ukhà*, or fish-soup. If made, as upon this occasion, of sterlet, it is considered a great delicacy, and, except upon the banks of the Volga, is a most expensive dish. It was excellent, but we did not partake of it freely.

Towards evening the wind fell, but we shrank from encountering the dust in the town, and preferred walking up and down under the open roof of the station, which formed a long terrace above the river. The Volga is very wide at Tsaritsyn, and looked like a great mirror spread between us and the low, billowy banks of the far-off eastern steppes, which must have been between three and four miles away. The scene was peaceful now; but before the introduction of steam, what wild deeds had taken place upon that noble river, what streams of blood had mingled with its waters! Pirates, famous even amongst barbarous hordes for their cruelties, had haunted it. The ships of Stenka Razin

had swept over its broad bosom. Peter the Great had steered his rough bark down the swift current of that mighty stream; and on it had floated the golden barge which had borne along the Russian Cleopatra and her glittering suite. Not the tiniest sail now gave life to the rolling river, but a large vessel, which lay to, was taking in cargo near at hand; and as the bulky bales, containing probably wool and hides, were awkwardly shunted on board, the sailors kept time with a monotonous chaunt, which was soothing to the ear, as it came stealing through the still evening air.

It was a relief to escape even for a short time from our dismal chamber. We found that the gentlemen's waiting-room was occupied by the tall Russian and his Armenian friend, who were walking to and fro in another part of the station. We lingered out of doors as long as we could, and when driven in by the darkness, made two bowls of chai by the melancholy light of the feeble lamp, being afraid of lighting candles, lest the myriads of gnats should become still more pestiferous. Wrapping ourselves, therefore, carefully in our muslins, we lay down, thankful that the morrow would see us far away from Tsaritsyn.

The morning being fine, we descended to the water, and sat with our books upon the banks of the noble river, which flowed calmly and rapidly along. The sunshine flashed so brilliantly on the stream that we could scarcely distinguish the opposite steppes. We felt sad at the thought of leaving it, probably for ever, but our regret was relieved by pleasant contemplations of what was before us. Dinner was served at four o'clock, as the train did not start until half-past five. When that hour came, we paid the number of rubles demanded (there was no charge for the chamber), and seated ourselves in the Birmingham-made railway-carriage with feelings of intense satisfaction. As long as there was the possibility of obtaining a glimpse of the Volga, we remained with our heads out of the window; but the stately stream soon faded into a line of distant blue, and was at last absorbed by the swelling steppes. It was a glorious afternoon; the landscape was bathed in the mellow light of the declining sun. The undulating steppes that separate the two mighty rivers, which appear destined to shun one another, are here but fifty miles across. They grow a good quality of wheat, but lin seed is their principal crop. Both harvest were garnered, and the earth was brown a

bare, with here a solitary farmhouse, there a wide-spreading unenclosed patch of melons and gourds. Some of the latter, great golden globes, half hidden by the broad green sheltering leaves, were of immense size. Many a one might have gained a royal title for its owner, had it been exhibited in the Halles of Paris.* We stopped but twice, at lonely stations built of wood, where a few skin-clothed, lanky peasants, their long light hair bound back by a narrow black fillet, stood about with rude baskets of melons beside them, which they offered for sale to the scanty passengers.

* Each year there is a King of the Pumpkins elected in the Paris markets.

CHAPTER IV.

Kalatch—The Don—Fisheries—The Donskoi—Strange Rencontre—Navigation of the Don—The Kurgis Breed of Sheep—Traffic on the Don—A Communicative Russian Gentleman—Sponsors in Russia—Charge of Steamers—Rostof—Naketchivan—The Poor Russian Soldier—Travellers see Strange Things—The Mouth of the Don—Tumuli—Tanais—Fishing Huts—Fish found in the Sea of Azoff.

WE enjoyed our transit exceedingly, and were almost sorry when, in about two hours and a half, we arrived at Kalatch, which was a large and rather pretty town, the houses built of loose red brick, set in wooden frames, entirely differing in character from those along the Volga, and possessing much more colour, with a greater appearance of life. Extensive warehouses lined the river-side, great quantities of ammunition being shipped from Kalatch for the south of Russia, as well as agricultura[illegible]

produce, which is sent to the Black Sea, Turkey, and the Levant. My companion captured a porter, and pointed first to our luggage, and then to the smoking steamer. The man shouldered the luggage, and we followed him on board, where a little crowd was gathered before a kind of bureau. Whilst hesitating as to what we should do, a voice at my elbow exclaimed in French, "Madame, take care; the paint is wet." The remark was, alas! too late to save my dress, but it served as an introduction to the Russian gentleman who made it; and, feeling ourselves uncertain how to proceed, we asked him to settle with the porter, and to ascertain if we could procure a private cabin. He obligingly did both, but no separate berths were to be had, and we were obliged to stow away our things in the ladies' saloon as well as we could.

That business settled, we began to look about us. The appearance of the Don was poor after that of "the great river," the former being narrow and mean in comparison; but the banks were pretty, clothed with verdure and sloping vineyards, and delightful to eyes which for long had dwelt upon no green thing, no leaf, or blade of grass, which was not thickly coated with dust. Floating away from Ka-

latch, we glided by smiling villages, pleasant to behold. The Don, anciently called the Tanais, rises in the province of Tula, but becomes navigable only towards the middle of its course, the length of which is 1300 miles. In importance this stream is second only to the Volga. Its fisheries, which are monopolized by the Don Cossacks, are exceedingly rich. The Donskoi people object to be called Cossack, a name of doubtful origin bestowed upon various nomad tribes which overspread the Ukraine. The Don produces great quantities of sturgeon, which are squeezed, dried, and smoked in the same manner as on the Volga. Herrings, also, are abundant, but the more delicate sterlet will not live in its waters. A great deal of fishing takes place in Winter, when the fish are taken as they rise to the broken surface of the ice in order to breathe. They are immediately thrown upon the bank to freeze, and in this state are conveyed all over Russia.

Whilst speculating upon the history of this second great Russian river with which we had made acquaintance, the boat stopped at the pier of a comfortable-looking town, when, to my great astonishment, I heard a voice at my elbow say—"Madame, in that town I nearly killed my uncle!" This strange announcement

issued from the lips of the tall Russian above mentioned. "Indeed!" I replied, determined not to appear astonished; "is the reminiscence an agreeable one?" "Yes, madame, yes; in that town I nearly killed *le vieux*," continued our strange interlocutor, as he pointed to the Armenian who accompanied him; and there the subject dropped, leaving us none the wiser. The appellation of "uncle" in Russia does not always imply relationship; a young man speaking familiarly to an older friend will often call him uncle.

There were few passengers on board, and the boat was smaller than the Volga steamers, and by no means so well appointed. The navigation of the Don is difficult. Descending the river, the banks to the right are high, but to the left the stream appears to have no brim, and, spreading out at will, forms perpetual shallows and small islands. In seasons of drought, cargo has to be frequently shifted from one boat to another, which causes much delay and expense; and, from the beginning of December until the end of March, neither ships nor sledges can be used, on account of the uncertainty of the climate. During one week it will freeze hard, and the next may bring a complete thaw.

Perceiving signs of tea, we asked the Russian to order some for us, and he took the opportunity to remonstrate with us upon our extravagance in ordering the steward to make it. All ladies and gentlemen, he said, travelled with their own tea, sugar, and lemons; and every boat was bound to supply passengers with a table, teapots, and hot water at a fixed rate. Hearing this, my companion went down to visit our stores. The steward was called (we had no stewardess on board this vessel), and presently brought a small table, on which he placed a couple of teapots. The larger one was placed underneath, and, being full of hot water, it served not only the purpose of a kettle, but that of keeping the pot above warm. On these boats the fare, as on those on the Volga, is high, in consequence of the quantity of wood consumed; but people who know how, and care to manage, can live at a very small expense, bringing their own provisions on board with them, and supplementing their store from the shore. We paid four sous for the use of the table.

The evening air was so sweet and balmy that we sat on deck until it was dark; and the Russian gave us some account of the wild life he had led in the Caucasus. He had been

there, along with his regiment, for nearly seven years. The country, he declared, was exceedingly beautiful; chain above chain of blue mountains rising to the height of ten or twelve thousand feet, dominated by the lofty peak of Elbruz, draped in eternal snow. The open country he described as a tangle of brilliant vegetation, covered in Spring with yellow and white azaleas, red and purple rhododendrons, broom, and a thousand wild-flowers; whilst beneath oaks and chestnuts was spread a fragrant carpet of lily-of-the-valley, each tiny stream, too, being plentifully fringed with the bluest of forget-me-nots. Nothing, he went on to say, could be more solitary than the lives the officers led in this flowery paradise—"A man must either go mad, or drink away his wits. I chose the latter course. But," he added, "I have too much self-command to drink now." We were glad to hear it, but surmised that the mischief was already done.

We were alone in the ladies' cabin, and, preparing our sofas in the usual way, we lay down and fell asleep, soothed once more by the gurgling water, and thankful to have escaped from the discomforts of Tsaritsyn. When we awoke, the rays of the early sun were streaming through the cabin windows, and we hastened

upstairs, anxious to lose as little as possible of the scenery we were passing through. The river would have been a pleasanter object, had it been seen clear and blue, which was, however, far from being the case; but the right bank was prettily clothed with verdure. During the morning we passed several country-houses, and a good many vineyards, the grapes of which are packed, and supply many of the markets in Great Russia. To the left the shore was low and marshy, with tall reeds and rushes, affording excellent cover for water-fowl, which are found in great quantities. We saw different varieties of cranes, wild ducks, with outstretched necks, and flocks of cormorants, in the deep pools off the scattered islands; and the long spits of muddy sand—now quite bare, and never deeply covered by the water—were silvery with the number of white-plumed birds, which we believed to be grébe. There were not so many vessels as we had expected to see, considering the quantity of produce exported from this country, which is so fertile in corn, linseed, rye (which is largely distilled), horned cattle, and sheep. Of the latter, the Donskoi have a famous breed of the Merino species.

Away to the left, on the vast steppes between

the Don and the Volga, which may be said to have turned their backs on one another, the Nogai Tartars, the Calmucks, and the Kurgis breed the large-tailed sheep, the cushion of which is, in most Eastern countries, so highly prized as a substitute for butter. The fleece, however, is not nearly so valuable as that of the Donskoi animal. Many of the farms belonging to the latter people are most scientifically managed, being superintended by Germans. Cloth is the chief article of barter in the trade carried on through Siberia between Russia and China. A good many heavily-laden flat barges and rafts were floating down the stream, laden, we were told, with butter and cheese from Siberia, whose wide pastures supply Southern Russia, where there are few, if any, dairy farms. These articles are also exported largely to Turkey and Greece.

Our Russian acquaintance sat by us, sending us nearly to sleep by his continuous babble. He described in glowing terms the delights of fashionable life in St. Petersburg, by plunging into which it appeared that he had somewhat injured his fortune. He also informed us that he and *le vieux* were now travelling, in order, in some unexplained way, to repair the loss. He dwelt long also upon his wife and home *régime*, and upon the way in which his servants plagued

him, particularly his nurse; descanted with rapture upon the charms of his little girl; and the tears came into his eyes when he mentioned another child whom he had lost. We liked him better afterwards; but most Russians are kind parents and good husbands. After these subjects he rambled off into a quarrel he had had with his wife's family, and was so very communicative that we ventured to ask if Madame was handsome. "No," was the reply; "but she is very fond of me, and follows me about like a little dog." *Le vieux*, it appears, was no blood relation, but was allied to the family by a tie almost as strong—he was the little girl's godfather. We were aware that, in Russia, standing sponsor for an infant is regarded not only by the Church, but also by the people, as a sacred obligation. An American lady, the wife of Mr. G——, the engineer employed by the Russian Government to raise the sunken vessels at Sevastopol, had some difficulty in finding a proper godmother, when the Grand-Duke had offered to do her the honour of standing godfather to a child which was born during the operations; for in the Greek Church persons so standing are considered to become closely related to one another, and it was surmised that the Grand-

Duke might be particular as to whom he admitted into his family. Under those circumstances, a list of ladies was submitted for him to choose from, and immediately after the ceremony he presented the lady whom he had selected with a commission for her son. Our fellow-passenger, hearing that we had never seen a Russian christening, proceeded to describe the ceremony, which is very lengthy and highly symbolic. "Dost thou renounce the devil?" asks the priest. The reply, "I do," being given, he proceeds, "Turn to the west," the supposed abode of the Prince of Darkness, "and spit on him," says the priest, who himself sets the example. The child is then immersed, and anointed with the sacred oil.

The hours passed quickly in this gossiping vein. We stopped at two or three towns, probably German settlements, which looked unusually clean and comfortable; and once during the morning we took a turn on shore, and bought three large melons. The one which we immediately attacked was juicy and good; and costing but threepence each, we were able to throw away all but the ripest part. As evening stole on we appeared to advance very slowly, and at last stopped altogether. After a great deal of talking and running to and

fro, we were told that the steamer drew too much water for the present low state of the river at that particular point; and that we must either walk along the shore, or get into a boat, in order to reach another steamer, which lay a couple of miles further down. It was tiresome, for we had to collect all our things; and then, laden with parcels, and tucking our melons under our arms, we were handed over the side of the ship, and descended into a huge flat-bottomed barge, big enough to contain the passengers and all their luggage. The scene itself, however, was picturesque enough. The moon was nearly full, and appeared to swim in a luminous atmosphere, emitting a glorious light, which contrasted finely with the deep black shadows. Not a ripple stirred the calm surface of the water. The scene reminded us of an engraving we had once seen, representing a band of emigrants crossing some far-away American river. The sailors who punted us along began to chaunt a low monotonous song, the words of which were lost upon us; but in spite of the somewhat melancholy air to which they were wedded, they must have had some ludicrous meaning, as the people laughed and appeared to be amused. We were sorry when our little voyage ended, and we reached the

new steamer, twin to the one we had quitted, and in which we had still the comfort of having the ladies' cabin to ourselves.

Next day, whilst talking to the Russian, we compared notes as to the miserable lack of accommodation at Tsaritsyn. The gentleman's quarters appear to have been better than those allotted to us. Their windows were unbroken, and consequently they had neither gnats nor spiders; but ladies so rarely cross the steppes between the Volga and the Don that their comfort is not considered. Our informant went on to say that, had we ascended the Kama, we should have found clean little inns, and might have travelled in peace and comfort over a considerable part of Siberia. A good many rafts were now slowly ascending the stream, laden with wine from Greece—probably the sweet red Patras, which is largely imported. We noticed that there were no shrines on these rafts, nor had we any holy images upon the Donskoi boats. Are the people of Little Russia, then, less religious or less superstitious than those in the interior of the country?

The air seemed stagnant, and the sun was very hot as we crept lazily along. The tourist should visit the Don before he voyages upon the Volga. The scenery of the former river is

rural, pretty, and homelike, with its vineyards, its white villages and clean German settlements; but one is greatly tempted to look down upon it after having made acquaintance with the majestically rolling waters of the "great river," its wild sandy shores, solitary steppes, and unmeasured stretches of prairie land, swelling on to the Chinese frontier, inhabited only by tribes of nomad Calmucks and camel-breeding Kurgis. Now and then our shallow stream spread out to such an extent that it suddenly presented the appearance of a lake. In such places the pilot threw the lead, and the sailors shouted the depth, in a sing-song manner which was not unpleasant to the ear. In one place some eight or ten men, with long poles, came off from a good-sized town with a difficult name, and walked before the steamer, feeling for the channel. The water reached up to their arm-pits, and more than once we bumped the ground; but after a moment's hesitation we continued our way, starting innumerable birds from their homes on the reedy left-hand shore and small islands; while more than once, startled at our approach, a batch of wild swans rose with a whirr, and skimmed away in search of quieter quarters; but no quadrupeds were anywhere visible.

By way of trial, we ordered dinner for only one person, and although it could not be said that we left the table exactly hungry, yet our meal was not satisfactory. It did not "look" enough, so we did not repeat the experiment. Just as it was growing dusk, it was announced that we were again required to change our boat, and for the second time we had to pack our things together. This time it could not have arisen from want of water, for the up-boat came alongside, and the vessels exchanged passengers. There was no order; everybody appeared to be rushing about. A scene of great confusion ensued, and we had to keep a wary eye upon our small baggage. Where they had stowed themselves during the night, we never discovered, but in the morning we found several ladies on board, the deck cabin being quite full; but by two o'clock we were again the only remaining first-class passengers, all the others having landed at a large town some little distance inland, called Novo-Tcherkask. Here we parted with our Russian and *le vieux*, the latter certainly the silent partner on the journey, for we had not once heard the sound of his voice, while the former never allowed his to drop. We discovered that they were in pursuit of the Grand-Duke Constan-

tine, who was making a tour in the neighbourhood, and that their object was to obtain from him some place or pension.

A couple of hours brought us to Rostof. As we approached the importance of the place was indicated by the numerous craft upon the river, the tall masts of the vessels which crowded the long line of docks, and the numbers of people thronging the broad quays. My companion managed to get the luggage together, and have it placed upon a couple of droskies. "Gostennitza," said the lank-haired boys. "Parohod Taganrog," replied my companion, shaking her head, and off we whisked along the substantial quays. The luggage was carried direct on board the steamer which was to start in the morning; and, making our way below, we encountered a rough sort of steward, who pointed to a row of empty cabins. It was evident that we were at liberty to choose, but they were all equally dismal. In each a basin with net-work at the bottom was attached to the wall, and a bench was fixed to each side, covered with leather black with age and grease. We took possession of one of these unpromising holes, for they were little better, and placing our belongings upon the floor as the cleanest place, we went into the saloon to procure some

soda-water. The place was large, low, and dark, like the crypt of a barn, and when we hastened upstairs, we discovered the great size and exceeding dirt of the vessel, which proved to be an old Black Sea cargo steamer, taken from its usual station to convey the Grand-Duke and his suite from some port in the Caucasus to Rostof. It both consumed and carried coal, which for some time lay heaped upon the deck. The whole afternoon the crew were busy shipping more coal, along with tubs of tallow, and bales of wool and hides.

The nucleus of the town, which is quite modern, is a fort erected by Peter the Great, as a protection to the fleet which he fondly hoped to establish in the Black Sea. In a commercial point of view, Rostof is now a place of great importance, and the capital of the fertile district of Uerd. It is prettily situated. Many of the houses, which are of red brick and wood, are built along the shore upon piles, whilst others rise one above the other, and climb the terraced sides of the cliff, along which run long lines of barracks, always occupied by two brigades of the reserve division of the Caucasus. An almost interminable bridge of boats, the scene of the most restless activity, connects the town with Naketchivan, an Armenian colony,

which was removed from the Crimea and planted in the swamps of the Don by Catherine II. The inhabitants of the town are said to be very wealthy.

Along the same shore run long rows of wooden sheds, which, during the three hot months of Summer, are occupied by a population of some thousands of people, who are employed in washing and sorting wool. When the Autumn rains begin to fall, these dwellings are abandoned, the floors are covered with water, and in Winter they are fairly iced in. Every season the stores are rebuilt. We did not venture on shore, there being nothing to see, and the Winter mud and Summer dust are considered more abundant in Rostof than in any other town in Russia, which is saying a great deal. Finding a couple of camp stools, we sat down in the least dirty corner of the vessel, and looked on. It was pleasant to gaze on the broad, flowing river, its muddy colour lit up by the rays of a rich sunset. The bridge was thronged by an endless procession of people, and as the evening drew on bathing became the fashion. As we were not near enough to be inconvenienced, we were rather amused by the coolness with which the men and boys undressed, and left their clothes at the

mercy of the public, preparatory to taking headers.

Our couches, none of the softest, were made still more unplesant by their want of cleanliness, and the night passed wearily away. Ten in the morning was the time appointed for sailing, but long before that hour such numbers of people flocked on board that there was scarcely standing-room in the great ship. Groups scattered themselves over the deck. Those who had secured seats clung to them as for dear life, whilst others, not so fortunate, squatted upon the deck, climbed upon the barrels of tallow, or stretched themselves over the bales of wool or bundles of hides, regardless of the odour they emitted. Having been on deck early we had secured stools, which we retained with the utmost tenacity. Rich and poor were mingled together without distinction. Amongst the former were many ladies with exaggerated toilets, loud voices, and unpleasant manners, very unlike the low-voiced, gentle-mannered Russians whom we were used to see—perhaps some of them were Germans, and not Russians at all. The widening river, like most estuaries, was not particularly attractive. To our left there were swamps and lagoons, with tall grasses and canes, which sheltered innumerable wild-fowl; to our right a bare sandy spit of land. Our

boat was only threading one of the many channels in the wide delta of the Don, and we felt that the turbid river and the languid atmosphere must be very unwholesome, the heat of the sun sucking up in mist the evil element from the putrid water.

An hour after starting a general eating commenced. Some pulled out greasy provisions of their own, others were supplied from a kind of open cook's shop which was placed on one side of the deck, where the viands, cooked as soon as ordered, were placed upon a board in front, to which the dirty plates were returned. For the sake of obtaining the rejected morsels, some of the poorer passengers assisted in carrying and washing the dishes. Amongst them we were attracted by the appearance of a lame, sickly-looking soldier, in well-worn clothes, who got but little, and whose hungry look excited our compassion. Had he fought, we thought, for the Holy Cross, and for the Golden Keys? Had his long grey coat, which was seamed with many a scar, turned the blade of some good English weapon? We should never know; but my companion was tempted to slip half a ruble into his hand, which was very gratefully received. The dirt of the people around was something horrible, but it rejoiced

the hearts of myriads of lean-bodied yellow flies, which hovered around. The *débris* of the rosy-hearted melons, which was thrown about in all directions, made matters worse, looking, as it did, like clots of gore. It was an unpleasant scene, in the midst of which we held a consultation as to what it would be best to do on reaching Taganrog. The Black Sea steamer might not be in, as it was not to sail until the next afternoon. I was for remaining in our cabin, wretched as it was, but my companion declared, with tears in her eyes, that she should be ill if she had to sleep there another night; rather than do so, she would spread her shawls on deck. She (unwise girl) had turned up the bench, and discovered whole colonies of horrors. This being the case, we decided on leaving our present shelter, and trusting to chance for our night's accommodation.

The scenery at the mouth of the Don is very dreary, but became more interesting as we approached Azoff. The perfectly flat plain, bounded by the far-off horizon, was studded with tumuli. Most of these mounds indicate places of interment; but some are supposed to be landmarks, piled up at different times by various nomad races, to guide them over the snow-clad steppes. There is no doubt, however,

that the greater part are relics of a Milesian period, a colony of that people having, five centuries before the Christian era, founded, upon the site of the present fortress, a flourishing town, called Tanais, where they dwelt, and for a time subjugated the wild Scythian tribes; but Tanais fell at last under the dominion of the Bosphorian kings, one of whom destroyed its glory, in order to punish a few offenders for an attempted revolt. It lingered on until the Genoese took possession of it; but was sacked by Tamerlane; after which various races swept over it, ending with the Turks, and its present inhabitants, the Russians—an eventful history. At present the grey fort and small town looked quiet enough, in spite of their bloody pedigree. Our steamer stopped off the town, in order to let some very fine ladies descend into a boat, the water being too low to allow a near approach to the little wooden landing-place.

The shores now became studded with fishing huts, curious-looking dwellings, which were raised slightly above the water, and built upon piles. If a free current was not allowed underneath them, they would be washed away by the Spring and Autumn floods. These erections were placed wherever there was a point of land, or a firm spit of sand. Besides sturgeon, the

fish found in the Sea of Azoff are the belooga, the somga, and the taran. The latter is a large fish, shaped like a carp, and when dried and smoked is much esteemed by the Russian peasantry. One yield, says Mr. Seymour, has been known to produce a hundred and fifty thousand taran. The nets, which are sometimes a mile in length, are passed under the ice, where they are allowed to remain for twenty-four hours. Several hundred fishermen may be employed in the drawing of a single net.

Besides the caviare taken from the more delicate fish, there are three sorts pressed from the sturgeon—the white, which is the most delicate, as well as the rarest; the grey green, which becomes nearly black when pickled; and the red, which is altogether inferior, and prepared with little care. It finds a market, however, in Constantinople and the islands of the Archipelago. Winter is the great fishing season, and a curious sight it must be to see tons of these watery monsters, which are no sooner caught than thrown upon the bank to freeze, after which they are placed on sledges, to be conveyed inland. Seventy or eighty horses are required for the conveyance of one day's fishing; and the bells and coloured tassels which ornament their harness add to the gaiety and

picturesqueness of the wintry harvest-home. Should a thaw ensue, the whole produce is lost—the fish are only good for manure; and such a mass of putrifying matter is very apt to breed fever. The shores of this river abound also in melting houses, the export of tallow being prodigious. Those engaged in the business purchase their flocks and herds at the Spring fairs, and feed them upon the rich alluvial meadows which stretch down to the water; but it is a precarious trade, as in a year of drought the sheep and cattle cannot fatten upon the dried-up pastures. In the beginning of September the herds are slowly driven towards the melting stations, and at the commencement of October a general slaughter ensues. After the beast has been killed, the head and legs, as far as the knees, are cut off, the animal is stripped of its hide, its inside is taken out, and then, being divided into four quarters, it is thrown into the caldron, with the exception of two pieces of meat which are stripped from each side of the back-bone.

Turning its stern upon Azoff, our vessel now steered to the opposite shore, cutting right across the Gulf of Don. We never quite lost sight of land; but the eastern shore soon sank low into the sea. On landing at Taganrog,

the confusion was great, and we had to wait for a considerable time before we could get any one to attend to us. At last, however, our luggage was placed upon droskies, and we drove along the quay, in the hope of finding the Black Sea boat. Alas! it had not yet arrived, so we gave the order, "Gostinnitsa;" and, retracing our steps, we turned up a very steep road, and in a quarter of an hour reached the town, which is situated upon a high plateau. The inn we stopped at was a large house, built of stone—a decent-looking place outside. We made the chelovek understand that we required a room for the night, and must have our luggage brought up.

We had some little difficulty in settling with our drivers, who were inclined to overcharge. However, the waiter came to our aid, and obliged them to accept the sum offered, and they retired grumbling. Our room was very large, and not altogether uncomfortable. Strange and delightful sight, there was a small bedstead in the corner; and, what was even more extraordinary, there was a mattress upon it. We had not seen such a bit of luxury since leaving Nijni-Novgorod, and appreciated it accordingly. We had a couple of hours to spare before our four o'clock dinner, and we employed

the time to our satisfaction, by opening and re-arranging our trunks. In the early evening we set off to enjoy a ramble through the town. Peter the Great laid the foundations of Taganrog, in the year 1760; but, in accordance with one of the articles contained in the treaty of the Pruth, it was five years afterwards demolished, and rebuilt when, in virtue of another treaty with Turkey, the town with the surrounding district was restored to Russia. The substantial stone houses had every appearance of a riper age. Most of the merchants of Rostof live at Taganrog; and the place has an air of dreary prosperity. The long rows of dwellings are formally placed at right angles to one another; and we saw frequently intervening vacant spots, which were abandoned to weeds and rubbish.

The house in which the Emperor Alexander died has been converted into a chapel. The chamber where he breathed his last is, however, preserved intact. We did not enter it, being perfectly able to depict to ourselves the formally folded grey coat, the stiff boots, the toilet apparatus, and the inevitable pocket-handkerchief. There is a large Gostinnoi Dvor for the sale of household articles, and close to it a fruit and vegetable market of considerable

extent, where every possible variety of melon, pumpkin, and gourd lay about in careless profusion. There were also brilliant crimson heaps of tomatoes, as well as an abundance of grapes, pears, nuts and plums, and the stalls were ornamented with pyramids of remarkably fine lemons. The place itself was rough and disorderly, but the glowing colours and soft bloom upon the luscious fruit rendered it a pretty sight. We bought some fine Muscat grapes, and, passing extensive ranges of barracks, we sat down to eat them on a disused earthwork which crowned the summit of the promontory. The evening air was delightful, and the turbid sea, gaining by distance, lay bright and calm, gilded by the rays of the setting sun. Close to the brow of the cliff there was a copper-domed church, enclosed by railings and surrounded by trees, and there appeared to be large buildings attached to it. This we conceived to be the great monastery of Jerusalem, which is under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Jerusalem. Being closed, we did not see the interior. We lingered about until it was nearly dark; the rappel was loudly sounded, and then silence ensued, which was broken by the sound of many voices raised in harmony. The simple Russian soldier never lies down to

rest without joining in a hymn to the Almighty, whom he entreats to bless his slumbers; he then addresses a prayer to the image which is suspended round his neck, and the duties of the day are ended.

Turning towards home, our stores being nearly exhausted, we stopped to buy sugar and some of the lemons which we had admired previously. They were dear—as we had found to be the case everywhere, the consumption being great. On returning to our inn, it was agreed that my companion, being the most fatigued of the two, should take possession of the single bedstead; while the chelovek, who slept on a tumble-down old sofa (a chelovek on a sofa!—but there was no end of luxuries at Taganrog)—outside the door, spread a terribly flabby feather-bed upon the floor for myself, and, delicate attention, added to the accommodation the use of his own pillow. It must have been in service for years, and we quickly transferred it to the remotest corner of the room. The arrangement was far from comfortable, and, to make matters worse, a B flat made its appearance. At last we fell asleep, but had scarcely done so when a barrel-organ struck up, on the other side of the wooden partition, and dancing began—a traktir, or tea-house, being

attached to the establishment. It was impossible to renew our slumbers, and we tossed to and fro in a state of fever and irritation until two o'clock, when the music ceased and the company dispersed. In the morning we paid another visit to the fruit-market, where we bought a basket of grapes and plums for our voyage; and after dining at three o'clock, paid our bill—which was moderate—and, getting the chelovek to settle the fare beforehand with the drosky-boys, we drove down to the Quay.

CHAPTER V.

Steamers of the Russian Black Sea Company—A Strange Couple—Our Fellow-Passengers—Mariopol—Berdiansk—A Circassian Princess in the Second Cabin—A Short Visit to India—Straits of Kertch—Panbeapæum—Chair of Mithridates—Interesting Remains of Antiquity—Temple of Theseus—Nymphæum—Kertch.

IT was half-past four when we got on board the boat. The vessels belonging to the Russian Steam Navigation Company on the Black Sea are large and well-appointed. We were unable to procure a separate cabin, but the ladies' quarters were clean and commodious, and the re-appearance of blankets and sheets was pleasant. We chose berths with windows, in order to be able to read should bad weather come on. The deck itself was almost entirely occupied by the saloon cabin, but its roof formed a second deck, which was fitted up with an awning and benches.

When we first entered the saloon, we encountered the smiling and familiar gaze of a tall, flat-faced man, and our first idea was that we must have met him before; but, no, he was an utter stranger, and rather indignantly we turned away, and mounting upstairs, found a numerous company assembled, and a great deal of conversation going on. Some were Germans, who had come on board to see their friends off, and in the midst of the group stood a tall, thin lady of very peculiar appearance, who was speaking, with considerable vivacity, German to one, Russian to another, Italian to a third—all with equal facility. It was amusing to listen to her, and we were glad, therefore, that, when the bell rang for the shore, she did not take her departure along with the others. Talking was as the breath of life to this lady; but she had, at least, the excuse of talking well, putting her extraordinary talent for languages out of the question. She soon opened her battery upon us, pouring out a volume of the purest French, from which she glided into equally good English, which made the fifth language we had heard her speak during our half-hour's acquaintance! Her toilette was a marvel; she wore a dishevelled hat, no gloves, no collar, open sleeves and no cuffs, and the very dirtiest old

yellow china silk dress that ever mortal beheld, torn, cobbled, patched up and stained all over. The personal appearance of her husband, whom she pointed out to us, was in direct contrast to that of his wife. He was a small man, neat to a degree, with a little green satin tie round his neck, and something red about his waistcoat. No one could, for an instant, hesitate as to his nationality; he was Italian to the very end of his fingers, but where the erection upon his head hailed from was more difficult to conceive. It was large, light in colour, soft in form, and in shape resembled the slouching hat of a coal-heaver.

Whilst speculating upon the strange appearance and manners of this couple, the bell rang for tea, and Madame, rising along with us, expressed regret that she should not have the pleasure of our company during the meal; her journey had been long and expensive; she was short of money until she reached Odessa, and had therefore thought it more prudent to take second-class tickets. Amongst the company who assembled for the first time at the tea-table was the gentleman whom we had previously encountered in the saloon, and to whom, poor man, we had done great injustice in fancying him impertinent; he was the quietest, meek-

est of human beings, only tricksy nature had sealed his face with a deceptive grin. Madame, his wife, a plain little woman between forty and fifty, with gimlet eyes, which seemed to prick the person whom they regarded, spoke French fluently, and made use of it to ask innumerable questions. Her niece, who sat beside her, was a sulky-looking girl of sixteen. Madame speedily informed us that her husband had been trying a linseed farm upon the steppes, but it did not reward his pains; he had given it up, and they were now in search of fortune elsewhere. Opposite were another couple on their way to Yalta, the gentleman afflicted with a constant pain in his stomach, and hoping to be cured by warm sea-bathing. His little wife had a pale face, and a wealth of lint-white tresses, peculiar hair, without one particle of gloss, and as soft as the feathers of a callow-bird, the long tresses winding round and round her head; and, sad sight, near us was a tall and handsome young man, evidently in the last stage of consumption, and suffering much. His wife, a pretty, delicate-looking woman, with limpid eyes, spoke French well. They were on their way, she said, to Sebastopol, where they could procure kumyss, or fermented mare's milk, a cure which had been recommended to

her husband by a celebrated physician. "Besides," she added, "her husband's father lived there." Poor people, they had left five small children behind them, whom we felt sure that the father would never see again. It was very touching.

We were safely ensconced in our berths when the steamer stopped at Mariopol, the population of which settlement is entirely Greek. Great quantities of corn are shipped at its shallow port, which every year becomes more and more filled up. Near this town there is a miraculous image, and the chapel which contains it is much resorted to by pilgrims. Some hours later I awoke, and caught sight of the flashing light off Berdiansk, a place of considerable commercial importance, as it possesses the best anchorage on the Sea of Azoff. Here also the land gains ground. The always shallow Sea of Azoff has lost six feet in depth in a hundred and thirty years, and its navigation becomes more and more difficult. After this the boat cut across to some port on the eastern shore, which it made early in the morning, but we did not hear its name. When we went upon deck next morning we saw some men, second-class passengers, who had been taken on board during the night. Their costume was handsome, consisting of the

close-fitting Tartar cap, great-coat lined with fur, which reached below the knees, gold belts, with a pocket for weapons in front, silk under-skirts, braided with gold, and high boots. But amongst the ladies there was considerable excitement. A Circassian Princess, in gorgeous attire, along with two children and a maid, was said to have come on board. Her tall headdress of silver-tissue, her Cashmere shawl, her bracelets, and embroidered robe, but, above all, her shoes, which were turned up at the toes, and were also of silver, were reported by those who had had the good luck to catch sight of her, to be magnificent. We were quite sorry not to have all this grandeur in our cabin, but the Princess was economical, and had chosen to travel second-class.

The hours for meals on board these steamers are badly arranged for the comfort of the passengers. Tea, hard biscuits, and bread, were doled out at eight o'clock; after which refection we had to wait until twelve o'clock for *déjeuner*, by which time the company were ready to fall-to like boa-constrictors. Dinner followed all too quickly at four o'clock, and then, with the exception of tea and biscuits (which it was really impossible to eat), there was no prospect of a meal again for the next twenty hours.

Had it not been for our fruit, we should have been half famished.

The pale drab Sea of Azoff is utterly wanting in life and colour; great dull-looking masses of weed came floating by; a few crested waves would have been a pleasant break to its monotony. But we had plenty of books, and talked to our neighbours. We found our voluble acquaintance of yesterday very amusing and exceedingly communicative. She speedily informed us that she was by birth a Pole, but had married a Frenchman for her first husband, an Englishman for her second, and a Neapolitan for her third. The two first had been successful speculations, but the last venture was a failure. She naïvely declared Signor V——, who was, of course, a Marchese, to be a most ill-tempered little man; but notwithstanding that defect, we found him a gentlemanly, pleasant travelling companion, and he afforded my companion the opportunity of airing her Italian. Their travelling-party consisted of five persons —the Signor's nephew, a scampish-looking youth with a sprouting beard, Madame V——'s niece, a sickly girl of twelve, with wistful eyes, and a Belgian governess. The whole family had been out to India to see a coffee plantation which had been left to Madame V—— by her

English husband. On arriving at their destination, they remained there for one week, during which the whole party quarrelled to such a degree that at the end of it they all set off again for Europe. Then came the history of their various adventures *en route*—of how the Signor flung the first thing which came to hand at the first head which chanced to be in the way, hurling his weapon with extra vengeance if the head happened to be his wife's; how the governess had proved infinitely troublesome, neglecting her pupils, and forming an attachment to Monsieur's nephew; and how the "happy family" were about to separate at Odessa, whence Mademoiselle was to be forwarded to her native Belgium, and the Signor and his nephew to proceed to Naples, where (for a consideration) they had agreed to live for the rest of their days without troubling the lady. But Madame V—— was clever, and could make herself most agreeable; she gave a delightful account of their tent journey through Persia, the scenery of which she declared was charming, and the flowers the most beautiful it was possible to conceive. She could never help, however, returning to the faults and foibles of Monsieur, describing with great animation the way in which he was in

the habit of spending his mornings in Paris, where, after lounging away the early hours in dressing-gown and slippers, he would retire to his room, and, drawing forth the *cartons* which contained his stores of gloves and neckties, blue, white, green, and red (his particular hobby), he would arrange his colours and jewelry according to his Italian taste, and having made a most careful toilet, would choose the cane which best matched with it, and pass the afternoon strolling down the Champs Elysées, or the Bois, in a state of beatitude. Occasionally he drove along with Madame, but that always led to a quarrel respecting the servants' liveries. Imbued with the good taste of her English husband, the lady insisted upon their being dark and simple; the gentleman, on the contrary, preferred a suit of powder blue, with a slight red line down the seams, and plenty of worsted lace cords and silver tags.

Having finished our *déjeuner*, we made inquiries as to the possibility of seeing the Circassian Princess, but learnt, to our disappointment, that she had doffed her finery, had stowed it carefully away in a bag, and was at that moment seated on the floor, wrapped in a washed-out cotton dressing-gown, busily employed, along with her children and servant,

in munching onions, of which savoury vegetable she had brought on board an ample store. In the afternoon we drew near a streaky line of land, and soon afterwards entered the Straits of Kertch at their narrowest part. To our left stretched a long spit of sand, whilst to our right rose the tall lighthouse and Turkish-built fortress of Yenikalé, which commands the passage of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. The fair-haired lady had visited this spot, and described the mud volcanoes and naphtha springs as being most curious, the mud and gas bubbling up from thousands of little tubular excrescences. The coast was so interesting that we regretted being obliged to adjourn to the cabin for dinner.

Just as the dessert was being placed upon the table, we slackened steam in the Bay of Kertch. No one cared to linger over the fruit, and we ran hastily upon deck, anxious to gaze upon the site of far-famed Panticapæum, the ancient capital of the Bosphorian kings. The scene was beautiful as well as curious. The large modern town lay sloping to the water, and towering above, as if to protect it, arose a lofty, craggy hill, near the summit of which is placed the modern museum, a building of purely Grecian architecture, which occupies the

rocky plateau, the site of the ancient Acropolis, the white portico producing the happiest effect against the grey background. The mountain terminates in a sharp peak, out of the side of which is scooped the singular excavation called "The Arm-chair of Mithridates." All were eager to land, and we ran down to the second cabin to claim a map which we had lent to Madame V——. The onion-eating Princess was at table, the governess in bed close by, and the atmosphere so unpleasant that we made our escape with all possible haste. The moment the vessel touched the side of the quay, there was a general exodus, all being keen to enjoy the charming evening according to their taste. We gained the foot of the hill as quickly as we could, and mounted a steep path which led to the Acropolis. The low modern walls that surround it are reared upon ancient foundations, the line of which, enclosing an area of two hundred yards square, has been strictly kept. On this spot once stood two glorious temples—one dedicated to Cybele, the other to Ceres, with buildings attached to them for the accommodation of the priests. There was also a fort and a palace, in the latter of which Mithridates breathed his last. The space, alas, is all too

level now, being occupied by the museum alone, which is an exact model of the Temple of Theseus at Athens; but the two look as different as a young man and his aged grandsire, one glistening fair and strong, the other time-gnawed, dark, and falling to decay.

We groped about and found many traces of old brickwork, as well as ancient cuttings upon the face of the rock, where buildings had been erected. The wonderful relics which we had studied with so much delight at St. Petersburg were removed from the Kertch Museum before the English and Turkish occupation, and so escaped injury during the bombardment. We did not enter the building, although it still contains a small collection of antiquities, being more anxious to seek for external traces of the old Milesian colony which was founded as far back as the seventh century before the Christian era. Leaving the plateau of the Acropolis, and ascending a zig-zag path, we passed over the site of the ancient Greek town, which wound round the summit of the hill. There were mounds and ditches, and lumps of brick so strongly cemented together that the storms of five-and-twenty centuries had failed to separate them. Pieces of sculptured marble were also lying about, and one solitary shaft of masonry

bore traces, we fancied, of having been covered with it. We supposed that this portion of the ruins had formed part of a gateway. Some of the ground in the same locality had evidently been used, in comparatively modern times, as a place of interment; but the cemetery itself had turned to dust, leaving behind the stouter relics of an earlier age. The so-called chair of Mithridates is a large semi-circular niche, scooped in the rock, which rises to a point immediately above it. Pieces of cement and brickwork cling to it, and it is supposed to be the remains of some sacred edifice, probably Christian. In its immediate neighbourhood an empty sarcophagus of great size, with a hollow for the head, was found. This, however, has been removed—a circumstance, perhaps, not to be regretted, inasmuch as, being perfectly plain, it could not well be considered a work of art. Its value would have been greatly enhanced if it had been left in its original position. The slab which covered it, and the five steps which led to it, still remain.

We were able in many places to trace the ditch and fragments of the wall that enclosed the earliest town, which, as population increased, overflowed its boundaries, and crept down the hill. A large gap, with hillocks of

hewn stones on either side, clearly marked the site of the principal gateway, which was in the centre of the western wall. Scrambling over crags and heaps of ruins, we struggled through the brushwood, and sat down upon the highest ledge of rock which presented itself. A wonderful panorama here unrolled itself at our feet. To the east lay the tranquil sea, curving into the bay, and bathed in the mellow light of the golden Summer evening. Turning to the left, the eye ranged over a vast plain, which, stretching far away, melted into the sky. More moor than steppe, the colours it assumed were glorious; the earth appeared to be clad in a rich mantle of violet and deep blue, upon which the decayed vegetation and burnt-up grasses had embroidered long bright stripes of yellow and brown. Not a village, not a sign of human life or habitation, was visible; the dead alone were in possession of this solitary region. Tumulus after tumulus marked where they slept; the whole place, as far as we could see, was dotted over with them. Two mounds of considerable size, at the bottom of the hill, were marked upon Mr. Seymour's map as the pottery hills, but to what period they are attributed we had no means of ascertaining.

The view to our right was even more striking

and interesting than the one above described. A road, which may still be traced, led down from the western gate into the plain, over the Golden Mountains, and forty miles away to Theodosia. The whole route was anciently an Appian way of tumuli, which still crop up thickly at the foot of the hill—irregular in size and in rows of four or five in depth. These are believed to be the earliest tombs, the work of the first settlers. Several of them have been opened, and skulls found encircled with wreaths of beaten gold, representing branches of laurel and bay; these are now removed to the museum at St. Petersburg. Beautiful ornaments, in the same precious metal, have also been discovered —necklaces and bracelets, along with deities in terra-cotta, and some fine funeral and other vases, such as in Italy would be called Etruscan. These had evidently been made upon the spot, being marked with a griffin, the emblem of Panticapæum. A rather favourite representation upon this pottery was that of a warrior in Scythian costume, fighting with a griffin and Amazons, the latter, curiously enough, pictured in the costume now prevailing amongst the female Caucasians. Three or four miles across the plain ran a long line of swelling hills, called by the Tartars Altum-Obo, or the Golden Mountains, in whose bosom the

Bosphorian kings chose to lie down to rest, their outlines tenderly defined against the amber sky, and the hues of the amethyst playing upon their sides.

What treasures these tumuli have contained, and probably still do contain! It was in their recesses that the tomb of King Parysades I. and his family, B.C. 407, was discovered, the wondrous contents of which we had seen at St. Petersburg. On a spur of the same range, according to Mr. Seymour, stood a cone-shaped tomb, formed externally of large clear-cut blocks of stone, placed together, without cement, and in a circle. The steps rise, one higher than another, until they terminate in a single block. This erection must greatly resemble the so-called tomb of the Christian near Blida, in the province of Algiers, which was doubtless the mausoleum of the Mauritanian kings; and it is remarkable that the same legend—that of a woman clad in white, and guarding a treasure, who is waiting and watching to share it with her lover, attaches to both places of interment. Some of the shapeless hillocks which sprinkle the plain are said to consist entirely of the bones of horses; and it has been suggested that the Scythians, who worshipped an iron scimitar, to which they

sacrificed horses and cattle, may have performed their religious rites upon these spots.

We were loth to turn away from these most interesting remains, but the twilight was stealing on, and we were anxious to visit the very early Byzantine Church whilst it continued light. The first part of our descent was steep and rough, but once past the plateau of the Acropolis, we struck into a fine broad road, leading down into the town, which had an air of considerable importance. We could see a handsome square, surrounded by colonnades, and intersected by wide streets, bordered by handsome houses, and shaded by plantain trees. We had not seen such an appearance of life and civilization for a long time. Kertch has no resemblance to a Russian town, the prime elements of which are copper-headed churches, green roofs, mud banks, and dust. Traces of the bombardment were still discernible in the ruined houses and tottering walls of the upper town, as well as in the shattered state of a very beautiful staircase, built during the Turkish occupation, out of the precious marbles found in the area of the Acropolis, in the ancient town. Two curving wings terminated in a wide flight of steps, the walls of which were lined with fine specimens of gallo, verde

antique, and beautiful red, green, and grey porphyries. Many a chip in the white balustrades showed the marble to be Greek, by its high state of crystallisation. The little church once stood within the walls of the fortress, which has been destroyed. It is exceedingly small, and having, like most Byzantine churches, no external ornamentation, looks very like a hump-backed barn. But this building is interesting from being the oldest existing church in the Crimea—it dates from the year of our Lord 757; the most ancient Greek Church in existence is the Cathedral at Athens, the foundation of which was anterior to the time of Justinian. The sacred edifice at Kertch is very dark inside, being lighted only by eight slits in the cupola. The latter is supported by slender Corinthian columns, beautiful in form, but made of that ugliest of marbles—cipolino, used in every ancient church upon the shores of the Black Sea, and supposed to have been all supplied from one quarry near Constantinople.

The nearly-full moon was rising, and the well-paved streets were lighted up by her rays as we hastened through them in search of a photographer. We found one at last, in a far-off suburb, and chose three or four views of the

hill and bay; but could not meet with any representation of the tumuli. As usual, we had to pay an extravagant price for those we purchased. Turning our steps towards our floating home, we discovered a road skirting the sea, which shone and sparkled in the brilliant moonlight. One half of our ship lay in the deepest shadow, but every rope and spar was as visible as if it had been broad daylight. The modern Temple of Theseus stood out majestically against the dark rock, and looked lovely in the silvery light. We tried to picture to ourselves this craggy mountain, ornamented with its temples, palaces, villas, gardens, and to imagine how beautiful it must have been on some such evening twenty centuries ago. Such thoughts were not untinged with melancholy, making as they did our span of life, our struggles, our desires, all seem so small and evanescent. The balmy air was quite delightful—we seemed to have jumped at once into the soft South. The buildings were less sharply defined against the sky; and there was a lingering tinge of violet towards the west, utterly different from the decided colours of the north.

We found our little world assembled at the tea-table, a sorry meal for hungry people. We sup-

plemented it with ham and bread and butter, to the evident surprise of the steward. Afterwards we repaired for a short time to the upper deck, anxious to profit as much as possible by the splendid evening; but all was not peace there. We found the Signor endeavouring to persuade his wife to come down to the cabin, but Madame was wilful, declaring that she could not stand the bad air and the smell of onions. So, spreading her plaids upon the boards, she rolled herself up like a mummy, and we left her to enjoy her moonlight slumbers.

We were quite gay in the ladies' cabin. Madame asked innumerable questions, which, when we were inclined to answer, we responded to by a laugh. She had confided her history to the lady with the lint-white locks, who was highly amused thereat, and hastened to make us partakers of her mirth, Madame, it appeared, in spite of her years, was almost a bride; having only lately married the gentleman with the smiling countenance, after wasting her early days in an unfortunate attachment to "a youth, who, alas! was unworthy of her." We should have lain down to rest with feelings of perfect content, had not the distant cough of the invalid struck sadly upon our ears.

Our little company were early astir in the

morning, My companion set off to bathe along with *ma nièce*, and Madame, who had the unusual Russian merit of liking cold water, took herself and her towels off upon a solitary excursion. The morning was lovely, as the previous evening had been. The water was exquisitely clear and green, long tresses of mermaid's hair came streaming past, polypi and jelly-fish rose and sank, displaying their long, fibrous limbs; and the boat not starting until twelve o'clock, we had time for a ramble along the strand and through the town. When the vessel steamed out of the broad bay, we felt quite sad at leaving a spot so full of interest.

Kertch is a place where a week or ten days might have been delightfully employed. How charming to have strolled along such a shore at leisure—a shore which is rich in natural productions, amongst which are very rare fossils, and bristling with the ruins of grand old cities reared in the palmy days of Greece. About twelve miles from Kertch there was, not so very long ago, another fine bay, but within the last century a bar of sand has stretched itself from point to point, and its site is now occupied by two or three salt lakes. Upon its southernmost horn once stood the city of Nymphæum, which, as well as Panticapæum, was

founded in the seventh century, B.C., and taken by the Athenians in the time of Pericles. Some solitary heaps of stone are said to mark the spot where it stood, but the ridge of sand concealed them from our view. Rounding the prominent point of Cape Takli, we passed out of the Straits, and were finally launched upon the bosom of the Black Sea, the often stormy waters of which were smooth and blue, and clear of sandbanks. We approached quite close to the shore, which is rocky and picturesque. Off the small Tartar town of Opuk, which stands upon a height of tumbled limestone, there are two or three craggy islands. The fair-haired lady and her husband, who appeared to be well acquainted with the coast, had visited them, and declared the remains upon them to be considerable. There were ditches and walls, they said, and the site of the Acropolis was clearly visible. These are the relics of the ancient Kimmerium. The object of our informants, however, in landing, had been to see some very curious and beautiful grottoes, which pierce deeply into the rocks. This same couple sat opposite to us at dinner, and the gentleman writhed about and pulled such pitiful faces, that I was induced to offer him half a dozen drops of Rubini's camphor upon a mor-

sel of sugar. Great was the effect produced, for no sooner had he taken it into his mouth than he bounced up and fled to the side of the vessel, declaring that he was killed. There was quite a commotion on board, and I registered a vow in my mind never to physic a foreigner again.

CHAPTER VI.

Theodosia—Russian Vandalism—Picturesque Street—Immense Stones used in Building—Public Gardens—Tower of Clement VIII.—The Armenian Church—A Cool Çircassian Princess—Vessels of the Russian Steam Navigation Company—Scenes on the Steam-vessels—Soudak—Planting of Vineyards—Wine produced—Tchadir Dagh—Aloushta—Headland of Mount Kastele—The Tauric Range—The Alma—Bay of Lambat—Aiou Dagh—Urzoff—Prince Woronzoff's Jardin d'Acclimatation—Luxuriant Vegetation—Yalta.

AT six o'clock we anchored off Theodosia. This well-situated town slopes gently down to the bay, which, with the exception of those at Sebastopol (that can scarcely be called bays), is the finest upon the Black Sea coast. The vicissitudes which this city has undergone are very curious. Founded by the Milesians, and afterwards under the sway of the Bosphorian Kings, for nine centuries it was great and

splendid; but in the third century of the Christian era, when it had been almost swept away by the successive hordes who overran the Crimea, the surrounding country was seized by the Tartars, under whom the desolate town was called Kaffa. Such was its condition until the year 1280, when the Genoese, landing upon the shores of the beautiful bay, at once comprehended the advantages of its position, and obtained from the Tartar Prince, Oran Timour, permission to settle there. Under their able rule once more arose a powerful and magnificent city; its port was full of galleys, its streets alive with commerce, and the name of Kaffa was exalted high among nations. The far-sighted Genoese obtained, besides, the grant of a monopoly of wheat and salt, and set themselves down also at Kertch, at Taman, and at Tan, in the Gulf of Don. Such successful enterprises on their part excited the bitter wrath and jealousy of the Venetians. Their rival navvies had bloody encounters in the Black Sea, and in the year 1296 the latter took Kaffa by surprise, and utterly destroyed the town, along with the numerous ships lying in the bay.

The reign of the conquerors, however, was short; the following year the Genoese regained possession of the soil, and Kaffa arose from its

ruins more magnificent than before. It was built in imitation of "la Superba," and Pope John XXIII. raised it into a Bishopric. But Kaffa was not to rest long in peace; in 1348 Djanibek Khan, the King of Kiptchak, besieged the town. The Genoese, however, held their own, repulsed Djanibek Khan, and strongly fortified their city, adding to it a castle, deep ditches, walls and towers; and, as it is easier to steal than to quarry stone, they erected their new defences out of the ruins of Kimmerium. These works were finished in 1396, under Benedict Grimaldi. Kaffa increased in size and prosperity, and security and tranquillity again prevaled; but, alas! again for a time only. In the Summer of 1475, the admiral of Mahomet II., Achmet Pasha, appeared before it with no less than four hundred and eighty-four galleys, which were furnished with new and terrible engines of war. Kaffa was bombarded, and the Genoese forced to surrender, losing not only their rich city and beautiful palaces, but their personal liberty. The inhabitants were compelled to establish themselves in the suburbs of Constantinople, and worst of all, fifteen hundred of them, in the flower of their youth, were obliged to serve in the ranks of the enemy. A garrison was established in Kaffa by the Turks, and the

Tartars, being allowed to trade from it, its commerce once more revived and flourished, and the place was called Kutchuk Stamboul, or, "Little Constantinople." But the Turks themselves had to give way before a still more powerful enemy, invading Russia, and in the reign of Catherine II. it was added to her vast dominions. Under her new masters Kaffa, to which the ancient name of Theodosia has been restored, has not prospered, having sunk into a third-rate town, of 4500 souls.

As we stepped on shore, we could not but reflect upon the various nations who had, in their turn, possessed and been dispossessed of the soil we now trod upon, and wonder for how many centuries to come it would own the sway of the Czar. Nothing lasts for ever in this world, and in a flight of fancy, we asked would Prussia ever cross the Danube, and found settlements in her turn in the Crimea? Would the beer-jug foam and the glasses chink upon these ancient and classic shores? The town appeared to consist of a long wide street, and a large open square bordered the barracks. To clear space enough for the execution of military manœuvres, the Russians, who certainly do not shine as antiquarians, pulled down many buildings of great interest and beauty. Amongst the rest they

levelled to the ground the Genoese Cathedral, which dated from the fourteenth century. It had been converted into a mosque, to which minarets of vast height and elegance were attached. When the latter were destroyed, Dr. Clarke happened to be in a coffee-shop near the spot. He describes the distress of both Turk and Tartar at hearing the sound of their overthrow. They jumped up with flashing eyes, exclaiming, "Scythians!" a common term of reproach, which may be translated, "Barbarians!" With equal vandalism, and even less common sense, the Russians blew up the aqueducts which supplied the town, and destroyed the fountains, giving as a reason that as the cool, refreshing water they shed was attainable by everyone, the water-carriers would be thrown out of employment if they were allowed to remain. Some baths, the walls of which were covered with exquisite arabesques, were pulled down by the ill-paid employés, in order that they might sell the lead with which they were roofed.

The long street was picturesque—the old houses were built of great square stones, probably the spoil of some Greek, or, so large were they, Cyclopean building. They looked good for a few thousand years more, and were sheltered by colonnades, the heavy roofs of which

were supported on slender columns, stolen no doubt from many a temple and many a villa. They were let into blocks of stone, gnawed by age, and had they been scraped, many a beautiful specimen of marble would, no doubt, have been disclosed. Kaffa had only followed the example of her Genoese mother, who decked herself out from the ruins of Carthage, and of Ephesus, and many another city whose name alone remains. Had it not been for the absence of sailors, fishermen, chestnut vendors, and a motley crowd of people, we should have believed ourselves to be in *la superbe*, on the quays down by the water, under the like colonnades, where many a time we had hunted for *bric-à-brac*, and found nothing but marine stores, old ropes, rusty iron, and second-hand clothes; whilst the smell from the Pescherias, the Fritturias, the rancid oil, the sour wine, and the salt fish, rendered the atmosphere almost intolerable.

The street of Theodosia terminated in a public garden, in which the vegetation was of the scantiest; but there were seats, and it was pleasant to rest close to the crisp waves, which curled round the beautiful bay, fringing it with foam. Close at hand stood the old citadel—a vast pile of ruins, surmounted by a square tower—the tower of Clement VIII., so called

because that pope preached a crusade in favour of the Catholic city, at the time when it was attacked by the Tartars. We rambled through the roofless guard-chamber, and into the desolate halls, where the wide stone chimneys were burnt red by the flames which had boiled many a flesh-pot, and shed a glow upon the hearth-stone, now cracked and overgrown by weeds.

Near to the Castle stands the Armenian Church. We tried in vain to get into it. This building was erected in 1319, at which period numbers of that people, driven from their own country by the horrors attending a terrible earthquake which desolated great tracts of country, sought refuge, some with the Genoese in the Crimea, others with the Kiptchak Tartars, near Astrakhan. The Armenians flourished under the protection of the Genoese in Kaffa, and they must have been very numerous, for at one time they had in this town no less than thirty-two places of worship. The outward walls of the church we came upon were perfectly plain; but there is another, mentioned by Mr. Seymour, which is in a very perfect state, although converted into a warehouse. He particularly speaks of its portico, mouldings, vases, and of the funeral crosses which still decorate its interior. We much regretted that

time did not allow of our searching for this edifice. Retracing our steps, we waited for a short time by the sea, agreeing, as we conversed, that the reminiscences of ancient Greece and mediæval Italy were much more to our mind than those of Russia, with the barbarism of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Catherine II. Having settled this point, we set off in another direction, and made an unsuccessful search for a photographer.

On arriving once more on board, we found Madame V—— in a considerable state of excitement. It appeared that the Circassian Princess had amongst her effects a large pillow. "Auntie," says the little girl with the long eyes, "a bit of your Indian muslin gown is sticking out of the Princess's bag." Hearing which, it appears that Madame, finding a pair of scissors, seized the sack, cut it open, and, strewing the contents upon the floor, discovered certain articles which belonged to her, the Princess looking on with unruffled serenity.

When bed-time arrived, we found the ladies downstairs, very active. Our friend with the downy hair was making a poultice, in the hope of alleviating the cough of our sick fellow-traveller. Poor fellow, every hour he looked feebler; his cheeks became more flushed, his

large brown eyes brighter. Madame, on her side, was mixing a potion for the gentleman to whose woes I had vainly endeavoured to minister. After a good deal of mirth and chattering, we got into our berths, which, by-the-by, had never been made since we started, and this was our third night. The boats belonging to the Russian Steam Navigation Company are fine vessels, but not well appointed. They carry but one woman, who attends upon both first and second-class passengers, as well as upon the ship's officers; and having so much to do, she does nothing. The sea was a little brisk, but we slept profoundly, until roused by a scream which proceeded from *Mademoiselle ma nièce.* The port-hole had burst open, and a wave had washed over the unfortunate girl. Peace and silence were scarcely restored in that quarter, when I found the effects of a leak in my own window, and had to descend in search of towels, to sop up the wet. Carefully shrouded from profane eyes by ample curtains, close to me reposed the fair-haired lady on a sofa; but curtains are treacherous—they separate sometimes, and what should I see, hung upon a peg, but two magnificent long braids of the fairest hair!

We rose with the sun next morning, and has-

tened on deck, hoping to catch sight of the fortifications and towers of a fine Genoese castle which is placed upon the bold promontory of Soudak. Alas! we were too late, having passed it at daybreak. We were told that the shore which we had skirted during the night was unsheltered and barren—quite a contrast to the cultivated strip of land that now lay before us, sheltered from the north by Cape Soudak, and guarded from the cold winds of the western steppes, by the peaked ridges of the Tauric range, which rose to the height of some eight hundred feet, running parallel with the sea, and about two miles from the water's edge. Green meadows, dotted with fruit-trees, sloped down into the very waves, charming the eye by their rich carpet of verdure. Wide-spreading walnut-trees appeared to grow with the greatest luxuriance, and there were flourishing orchards and vineyards. The proprietors of this favoured region have made great efforts to improve the condition and quality of the vine. This coast has, from very early times, produced considerable quantities of wine. Ancient presses are to be seen cut in the living rock, and Aloushta, from the quantities of amphoræ found around, is supposed, under the Greeks, to have been the head-quarters of this branch of commerce. In

the middle of the sixteenth century, Soudak is mentioned as being surrounded with vineyards, which were said to yield the best wine in the Crimea, and their excellence is spoken of by a French author in 1711.

In 1762 another writer of note lauds them, and states the price of the wine to be one penny a quart. Unfortunately, in consequence of the careless method adopted by the Tartars, this wine was not found to keep, and, having no reputation, was only sold amongst the poor. To remedy this state of affairs, Prince Woronzoff, the Princess Galitzin, and other proprietors, in the year 1826, set the example of planting vines which they imported from the most celebrated vineyards of France, Spain, and the Rhine, and by 1834 two millions of vines had been set. Good vine-dressers were brought into the country along with persons experienced in conducting the preparation of the wine, and vast cellars were built and fitted up. The enterprise, however, proved a failure; the wine was often good, but the price was high. The rich continued to drink French and Rhenish wines, the poor to buy that of inferior quality, and so for the better sort there was no sale. A wine company was established, with depots in different towns, who made matters worse by mixing the good and

bad vintages, and adulterating the liquor until it gained so unfavourable a reputation that no one would buy it at any price. Then the vines themselves, being young and frisky, were troublesome and uncertain, and frequent draughts often retarded the vintage until the September rains set in. It was also found that after the two first years they one and all forgot their mother country, the juices lost their particular flavour, and the fruit yielded a stronger wine, resembling that of Spain. However, the experience of each year has thrown its light upon the proper mode of treatment, and excellent wine is now made, but is not yet sold at a remunerative price.

The scenery became very pretty as we approached the little Tartar town of Aloushta. There were rocky cliffs which, riven asunder, displayed deep gorges; but here and there they disappeared altogether, and were replaced by highly-cultivated terraces and brilliant stretches of pasture land, allowing the eye to penetrate far inland. More than once we caught sight of the granite dome of Tchadir Dagh, the highest mountain in the Crimea, rising more than five thousand feet above the level of the sea. Nothing could look more peaceful than the little white town; the houses twinkled out of

thickets of foliage, amid the grey rocks, half concealed by shrubs of various hues, which stood up as if to shelter them. Justinian here built a fortress, the ruins of which still crown a promontory, that, shaggy with scrub, descends abruptly to the water. With Aloushta, the eastern coast of the Crimea is supposed to end.

On the western shore the scenery becomes very grand. The Tauric range approaches, sometimes sloping, and covered with verdure; at others, its magnificent spurs of red rock advancing into the waves, which never cease to fret and foam round their base. All the passengers assembled on the upper deck to see the perpendicular headland of Mount Kastele. The lightnings of thousands of years have scathed and split the hard marble, and the great blocks sent from its bosom crop out of the sea. Rounding Mount Kastele, we came upon an extraordinary piece of scenery, which modern travellers have christened Chaos. And well it deserves the name. Enormous masses of black limestone, belched forth from the crater of a neighbouring volcano, lie as they have fallen, piled upon one another in inextricable confusion, assuming strange forms of castles and towers. One could imagine that the angry mountain had vomited forth from her bosom some mighty

subterranean city reared by giants! What a terrific scene must have been presented when these huge blocks came crashing through the air, amidst smoke and flame and horrible internal rumblings, and fell hissing into the sea! Some of them choke the bay; they might have been steeped in poison, for not the tiniest herb or humblest lichen clings to them. Too hard for even the tooth of time to gnaw, there they lie, every splintered edge as sharp as if hurled there only yesterday. How the very earth must have trembled! how the antediluvian animals must have fled in fear! how the fishes, whose element was thus invaded, must have sought shelter in the deep sea, far from the troubled shore and its cyclopean shower; the very limpets, one would think, must have grasped the rocks more tightly!

The whole Tauric range has been raised by some violent convulsion of nature, which, breaking up the hard crust of the earth, has reared on high these granite peaks, leaving a substratum of sandstone and schist. This curious scene ends with the black porphyry Cape of Plaka, after which the tumbled cliffs are clothed with vegetation. The mountains recede, and lovely meadows slope to the sheltered bay, on which two villages are

situated, the Great and the Little Lambat, which retain their old Greek name, "The Town of the Lamps." Immediately upon the other side of the Tauric range the river Alma rises.

The whole of the Bay of Lambat and its adjacent shores, are sprinkled with ruins. Those of the Genoese and old Greek settlements, in which mortar has been employed, are perfectly distinct from those composed of great blocks of granite, carefully shaped and fitted together without cement, which are attributed to that fierce and mysterious people the Tauri; whilst the cyclopean remains are again different in character, and prevail among the relics of Kimmerium, in the tumuli on the spur of the Golden Mountain, and in many other places. Emerging from the Bay of Lambat, we sighted the superb headland of Aiou Dagh, or the Bear Mountain, at the foot of which, in a little sandy cove, rises a small village, which still bears the classic name of Parthenité. The "Village of the Virgin" is now occupied by a Tartar population.

Soaring upon the heights above, we could distinguish the grey walls of a monastery, which Dubois declares to be placed upon the site of an ancient temple dedicated to the Tauric Diana; whilst the extreme summit of the mountain is crowned, says Mr. Seymour, by a castle,

the walls of which are composed of enormous oblong blocks of stone, placed one upon another without cement. This we could not see, the boat being too directly under the precipice; but it must be a most curious relic of the Tauric race. It is built in the form of a semi-circle; the diameter of the wall is above seven hundred feet and the thickness five feet. It was guarded, on the sides by which alone it can be approached, by thirteen towers. This castle looked directly down upon the temple of the cruel goddess. Whether or not the magnificent mass of rock itself was the Kriu-Metōpon, or ram-shaped promontory, at which Iphigenia arrived, is a vexed question, which we were content to leave to wiser heads. We were filled with admiration, almost awe-struck, at beholding the grandest block of red marble which it was possible to conceive. It glowed like copper in the varied rays of the sun, descending in an almost perpendicular line into the clear green sea, as if to cool the mighty base, which was on three sides laved by the waves.

The little town of Urzof was once defended by a castle, built by Justinian, and repaired by the Genoese, the tall tower of which still keeps watch over sea and mountain. Cape Nikita and the hill of St. Daniel are the property of

Prince Woronzoff, under whose superintendence has here been established a vast *jardin d'acclimatation*, in which, the fair-haired lady informed us, there was a splendid collection of the pine tribe, believed to contain a sample of every known species. Half an hour more, and, gliding into a bay of heavenly blue, we stopped off the town of Yalta. A more lovely scene it is impossible to conceive. The grand steep precipices of tumbled rock, carved out of the towering Tauric range, the boulders and jagged points of limestone, would have appeared savage and terrible, had they not been covered with such a variety of vegetation. The different strata of these mountains bring together strange companions. The oak and the ash flourish side by side, neighboured by walnut trees of prodigious growth and length of limb, along with the turpentine-tree and the wild cherry, which was assuming its tint of crimson, the oriental juniper, which here attains an unusual size, the fig, and the date plum. All these, and many other trees, were chained to the mountain by long strings of the wild vine, and a thousand plants with streaming tendrils. It would have required the knowledge of a Linnæus to have classed one quarter of the creeping plants and luxuriant parasites

with which bountiful Nature has clothed the boulder-stones, and wreathed the pointed needles. Out of this mass of foliage every shade of green met the eye, from the tenderest tint with which some shrub was beginning life to the sombre black hue of the towering pines that crossed the heights.

The town itself, in which the Russian nobles play at simplicity, looked as charming as a young coquette in white. Its wooden houses and hotels, so homely in appearance, so extortionate in price, surrounded a small place, from which tempting paths wound, some passing through flowering shrubs down to the narrow strand, others climbing the tangled wilderness. One, cut in zig-zags, led up to the church of Masandra, which was built by Prince Woronzoff. Its architecture is Doric, a style which seems so appropriate and charming in this country. It replaces a great temple, from under which bubbled a stream of water that still flows on, glancing bright when, through the old oaks, an occasional ray of sunshine penetrates, and afterwards trickling down the hill, a thread of silver, till it is at last buried amongst the leafy branches. We longed to climb to the top of the mountain ridge, but the boat only stopped for two short hours at Yalta; and had

we done so, we should have had nothing to reward us but the sight of barren steppes, rendered inhospitable by the sharp winds from which the Tauric range so happily guards the favoured strip at its foot. The sea view was delightful; the blue-black water, streaked with purple, a mirror which reflected every cloud on high, the headlands which clove into the ocean, grand and imposing—nothing could exceed the beauty of the scene. The pier at Yalta is formed of large blocks of stone taken from a Cyclopean erection, of which considerable remains still exist a short way from the top of the town; but the water is not sufficiently deep to allow of the approach of a large steamer, and boats were plying about to convey the passengers to and fro.

CHAPTER VII.

Scenery on the Sea-board of Western Crimea—Gardens of Lividia—Palace of Orianda—Woronzoff's Villa at Alupka—Ai Petri—Bay of Laspi—Balaclava—Monastery of St. George—Cape Parthenité—Sebastopol—Hôtel Vetzel—Korniloff and Todleben—Ruins of Sebastopol—Mount Rudolpho—Remains of Fort St. Nicholas—Fort Constantine—The Valley of Tchernaya—Heights of Inkermann—Karabel Faubourg—Fort Malakoff.

ON regaining the ship, we found the lady of the tresses in all the bustle of approaching departure. She had visited the shore, and found the place so full that she had only been able to secure one small room, and that at an extravagant price. The whole community assembled on deck to say good-bye. Monsieur took leave of us in a most desponding manner, one hand stretched towards us, the other caressing the afflicted part. "Adieu, adieu,

ladies and gentlemen ; I go to lay my bones at Yalta." To our shame, be it said, we all laughed. A smile flickered over the pale face of his wife, and that was the last we saw of the lady with the lint-white locks. The poor invalid was coughing sadly. His wife being occupied below, we shut a window, in order to shelter him from the draught, and placed one of our air-cushions behind his back. If he spoke French at all, the exertion was too much for him at that moment, but he thanked us with his wistful eyes; and leaving him to the tranquillity of the empty saloon, we mounted to the upper deck eager to drink in the loveliness of all around.

This scenery has been compared to that of Amalfi, and the Maritime Alps near Salerno; but the Crimean coast, from Aloushta to Balaclava, we thought much finer. The headlands, which range from eighteen to above two thousand feet, are higher, more precipitous, and infinitely richer in the glowing colour of their red marble; whilst the tumbled rocks, which, like those of Amalfi, are formed of limestone, are ornamented with a much more luxuriant vegetation, ranging in tint from that of the callow bud of the shrub to the dark green of the Tauric pine and the funereal cypress. On the shores of the

Mediterranean, on the contrary, there is little to clothe the nakedness of the land, save the vine, which has only a few months of beauty, and the pale, silvery olive, which lends its own shade of peculiar grey to the landscape. We agreed that never, on the coasts of Italy, Spain, or Northern Africa had we seen such a combination of the magnificent and the beautiful, united with such a glow of colour, as on this seaboard of the Western Crimea.

For twelve miles after leaving Yalta, there is a succession of highly-cultivated estates, and the palaces attached to them glimmer white upon the mountain side. More delightful abodes it would be impossible for the imagination to picture. One would almost believe that neither sorrow nor sickness could enter their doors; and yet, if it were so, how hard it would be to leave them for the grave! The first of these we passed is called Lividia, "the Meadow," and was the property of the late Empress. It is situated upon a sloping plateau, a sheet of velvety green. The house is built of the white stucco to which the Russians are so partial. It is encircled by a wide balcony, and shaded by walnut-trees of enormous girth. We could appreciate their uncommon size, being only separated from the shore by a narrow strip

of crisp sea, every tiny wave of which was tipped with silver. The gardens of Lividia are celebrated for their luscious fruit, and the vineyards produce excellent wine. Within the domain stands a smaller villa, which was appropriated to the use of the Grand-Dukes.

Some three miles further on we came to Orianda, a noble palace, which occupies the site of an old Greek house. It is built in the form of a quadrangle, ornamented in front by a two-storied peristyle, flush with the wings, and was adapted from the Greek style by Schinkel, a celebrated German architect, employed to erect it by the Emperor Nicholas, whose intention it was, had his life been spared, to retire to this château. It was also his design to have settled a coterie of intimate friends upon the estate, for which purpose he built four other white pavilions, which are dotted about in the woods behind the palace. We noticed a rock-cut staircase, which wound up to a ledge shelving out high above the pleasure-grounds, and was sheltered by the steep precipice of Megábi. On it stood a model of the temple at Tivoli. Instead, however, of the brown hue into which long years have baked the Italian stone, this Crimean sister flaunts out white and shining. Seen from the water, the situation of the two appears to be somewhat

similar. The view, however, from the respective buildings is very different, the rocky gorge and waterfall of Tivoli being replaced here by a foreground of boulder-stones, sharp points of rock, set round with flowers, and a wide expanse of solitary ocean. Orianda, a pleasant name to pronounce, is now the property of the Grand-Duke Constantine. But the finest villa in the Crimea belongs to Prince Woronzoff, at Alupka. The boulders are larger, the groups more picturesque, the trees more luxuriant, than on any other part of the coast. Its situation is perfectly enchanting. The house is placed one hundred and fifty-five feet above the sea; the gardens, made amongst the rocks and broken ground, descend in rich confusion to the water; whilst, keeping watch from above, Ai Petri rears his shaggy head, which rises 3,900 feet above the strand. The villa is built of hard green porphyry, taken from a neighbouring crater, and is nearly hidden from view by the noble timber which shades it. This we regretted, as the style, which is said to be between the Elizabethan and the Moorish, must be very peculiar. A stream which is celebrated for its trout runs through the grounds; the fountains, which are famed for their beauty, are made of a grey porphyry, streaked with red,

which is only found in the Crimea, and is a fine stone, capable of receiving a brilliant polish.

There is, however, one drawback to this earthly Paradise; the serpents are innumerable —they hide amongst the flowers, and are to be found under nearly every stone. We believe that this was the palace which Prince Potemkin built in such hot haste as a surprise to the Empress Catherine, whom he received for three days, during the progress which she made through her newly-acquired dominions. The wine from this estate is good, but too expensive to be profitable.

The ever-curving coast forms next the Bay of Laspi. The old Greek town of that name was situated up a fertile valley, closed by Mount Ilia. We soon after rounded the bold headland of Phonas, with which this lovely, luxuriant western shore terminates. Turning abruptly towards the Chersonese, the sea-board is no longer sheltered from the cold wind which sweeps over the steppes, and its effect is immediately perceptible. Verdure no longer clothes the rugged rocks which jut into the sea, grand but charmless. Not approving of the change of scene, we suddenly remembered that we were exceedingly hungry, and began to listen with impati-

ence for the tinkle, tinkle, which was to announce that *déjeuner* was served. Monsieur, Madame, *ma Nièce*, the invalid and his wife, were to disembark, as well as ourselves, at Sebastopol, the rest of the passengers continuing their voyage to Odessa.

Our meal was near its end when our sly-eyed captain, looking up, pointed with his thumb to the grand headland which threw its shadow over the ship, and uttered one word, Balaclava. There was a sudden silence. My grapes seemed to stick in my swelling throat. I looked up through the window, and there, standing aft against the sky of fervid blue, was the tall grey tower which England knows so well.

I hastened on deck, thankful to be alone for a few moments. Unexpected tears rose to my eyes as I thought of our gallant army, of their hardships, their sufferings, and their courage, and of many a mother's joy who lay quietly there under the green sward. The Russians looked sympathetic; they imagined that we were making a holy pilgrimage, so Madame told us; and so we were, to the graves of our countrymen, but none of our own dead lay there. My companion was enchanted with the magnificence of the mountain, one mass of piled-up boulder stones. To me it seemed a mighty cairn, raised

over heroes: but I had seen the trembling hands and pale faces which had bent over the lists of killed and wounded during that terrible war, whilst she was playing with her doll. Besides, the young people of this age are not sentimental, and Balaclava "a yellow primrose was to her, and it was nothing more."

Another quarter of an hour, and, rounding Cape Violente, we gazed up at the monastery of St. George, and its poplar-clad terraces, the Grecian portico of its large-domed church, the sunny range of buildings inhabited by the superior clergy, and, higher still, on the very verge of the cliff, the dormitories of the monks, from which sprang one tall tower with an octagonal spire. What an isolated little world in itself, perched on the edge of that mighty rock, which descended sheer into the swelling sea hundreds of feet below. We saw the monastery of St. George on future occasions, but never so well as from our ship.

Terrific legends are connected with Cape Parthenité. The path is still visible which led to a ledge of rock where stood the temple of the cruel goddess, the Tauric Diana, who was to be propitiated by no less that the sacrifice of all strangers thrown upon her shore. They were led to her shrine, and from thence hurled

down into the remorseless waves. In the recesses of a natural amphitheatre close at hand, the fierce Tauri stood the while, exulting at the offerings made to their terrible divinity. Past the point of Kherson, the coast changes, as if struck by the wand of some malicious fairy. The morning's verdure, the mountains of the Tauric range, the red marble, and the grey limestone—all had vanished, and we were running under prosaic white cliffs, far inferior to those of our own Kentish coast.

Sebastopol,—strange that a town the name of which has rung from one end of the globe to the other, should not have existed a hundred years ago! When the Chersonèse was annexed to Russia, in the year 1783, its magnificent position was occupied only by a little Tartar village, called Aktiar, which was situated near the head of the great bay, or roadstead. The Russians at once perceived the immense importance of their acquisition, and no sooner were they in possession than they placed fourteen ships in the roadstead, and, with the greatest rapidity, proceeded to erect fortresses, quays, hospitals, and houses, bringing colonists from Great Russia to people their new town, for which a name was still wanting. That of Kherson naturally suggested itself, for many of

the buildings were not only erected out of the stones belonging to the old Greek town, but were dug from the eastern side of the quarantine harbour. But unfortunately the name of Kherson was already appropriated. The careless archæologists of Catherine's day had pronounced that ancient city to be far away on the banks of the Dnieper, and built upon some old swamp a new town, which they called Kherson. So another appellation had to be sought for, and at last the new colony was named Sebastopolis, the "City of Augustus," after an ancient Greek settlement, the ruins of which may still be seen upon the eastern shore of the Black Sea.

It was an exciting moment when we passed into the lion's toothless jaws. Quietly we glided between the Alexander and Constantine batteries. It appeared so strangs to take such possession of Sebastopol; and, rounding a fortress which was jagged with disjointed heaps of stone, we drew up near a quay, from which ascended handsome flights of stairs, ornamented with balustrades of fine stone, and leading to a Doric peristyle of dazzling white. A moment more, and all was confusion—Monsieur, Madame, and *ma nièce* rushed on shore, so eager to secure the best accommodation that they forgot to

make their adieux. We, on the contrary, lingered to the last, always unwilling to leave the ship which sheltered us, and begin again the battle of life. The invalid had sunk into a chair placed for him upon the deck, and presently a silver-headed, soldiery-looking gentleman came on board to greet him. It was his father, who, advancing, kissed his brow, and, stepping behind, threw up his arms with a gesture of despair, seeking the gaze of the young wife, whose limpid eyes filled with tears, which she turned away to conceal. Poor people!

There were some small carriages in waiting, one of which we secured, and ordering ourselves off to the Hôtel Vetzel, were set down there in a couple of minutes. This hotel had been recommended to us by Mrs. G——, who resided there during the time that her husband was employed in raising the sunken ships, after the conclusion of the war. Our landlord was a German, and had been for many years the *concierge* at the club-house; but that being completely destroyed, he later on bought the ruins of a house which was close to his old abode, placed the stones once more erect, and set up a small inn. But this building was possessed of peculiar interest, from having been the

residence of Korniloff, the hero of Sebastopol. The chief of the Black Sea fleet was not a man of genius, such as Todleben; but his patriotism, his simple faith, his full assurance that the power Divine would enable "Holy Russia" to conquer, in the strife, morally worked wonders amongst its brave defenders. Down the very steps we stood upon had he descended to meet his death-wound. He it was who, at once recognising the transcendent ability of Todleben, exerted himself to retain his services, at the time when the great Russian soldier was recommended by Prince Mentschikoff to quit the Crimea, the latter being unwilling to incur the expense of the engineering tools required by him.

The chamber allotted to us at Sebastopol opened from a wide passage, and was by no means the abode of luxury; but the white-washed walls, the scanty furniture, and the carpetless floors were clean, and the truckle beds furnished with mattresses, pillows, and sheets. The one large window overlooked a shady garden, with a low range of offices at the back, beyond which arose a steep hill-side. We were so anxious to set out on an exploring expedition that we scarcely heeded the strict simplicity of the accommodation; and, ordering

dinner of young Vetzel, a youth with flowing locks and gorgeous watch-chain, to which was appended a gold coin, that we always intended examining, but never did, we started off, with all the world of Sebastopol to choose from. By the maps which we had studied, we knew that there were two principal streets, and, turning to the left, we took that which skirted the south harbour. Close to the hotel a building was in course of erection, the only sign of activity we ever discovered in this ruined town. It was evidently intended to be ornamental, and the stone employed was very white and fine. We afterwards heard that the work was carried on at the expense of Baron Todleben, and was intended, some said, for a museum; others, for a private residence. All else was now utter desolation, though this street must once have been very handsome.

There were the remains of several public buildings, which, as well as the large dwelling-houses, were built of the stone which we had previously noticed. But, surely, such a mass of ruin was never before seen! With the exception of here and there a shattered doorway, or a flight of steps which led to nothing, the foundations of the houses alone remained erect, every vestige of glass and wood had been

destroyed or removed. In one place lay a fragment of carefully-carved moulding, in another a great square block, splintered, moved out of position, and half sunk into the cellar, close to which would peep up the rusty head of a cannon-ball, which, having done all the mischief possible, was now leading a quiet life. A first glance at the desolation around might have led a stranger to surmise that the town had been visited by some terrible earthquake; a second convinced him that the walls had not been "shaken" into heaps, but violently knocked over, splintered, and indented by some fatal iron shower. A few poorer houses, which sloped down to the harbour, had escaped, and were still inhabited, having been sheltered by the bank. Not a human being, however, was to be seen in the grass-grown street. We passed a large, domed church, which appeared to be shut up. The highway was as solitary as a thoroughfare in Pompeii.

On we went for more than a mile, coming at last to some uneven ground, then to ditches and earthworks, the sides of which were furrowed by great holes, round which the splattered mould, strewn with thick pieces of iron, told where the shells had burst. We scrambled up a steep ascent, ploughed and riven by

cannon-balls, of which many a one peeped out from the soil. In the distance, we saw larger works, and descending, as we best might, into a deep ditch, we toiled up again, and gained the summit of an elevated artificial plateau, which was surrounded by a deep fosse. Wherever the eye rested the tormented earth had been deeply cut or formed into massive ramparts. Every hole, every excavation and mound, was so distinct, so clearly defined—the vegetation so scanty—that the ground looked as if the death-struggle had taken place, not years ago, but months. A gaunt, hungry-looking man, with a basket and long crook, was poking about for bits of rusty iron, morsels of half-decayed leather, or some of those articles which seem to be made profitable by the very poor, though one would have thought that all such *débris* must have been collected and carried off long ago.

In our haste to be away we had forgotten our maps, and could not, therefore, tell with certainty anything about the hill on which we stood; but there was a certain charm in guessing, and we came to the conclusion that we were inside the line of defence, and that the works cut off from our position by a deep grip, and stretching along the ridge of a low

hill, must have been occupied by the French. In the background a pointed elevation stood prominently forth, and, by the amount of engineering skill which had evidently been bestowed upon it, we judged it to have been an important position. Somewhat bewildered by the various thoughts which came rushing up, we sat for a long time perched upon a stone. From our situation no view, either of the town or harbour, was to be obtained. All around was solitary and savage, a mere wilderness, which the short grass of the steppes had just contrived to clothe with scanty, wiry herbage.

We returned to the hotel by St. Catherine Street, too tired and hungry to try farther experiments for the moment. Dinner was ready, and we found the cloth laid at the end of a long table placed under a fine acacia tree in the garden, the primitive and delightful *salle-à-manger* used in Summer; and, during the whole time we stayed in Sebastopol, we took every meal *al fresco*. We brought our maps down to table. The best we had was one published before the war, and on comparing it with a very large and good one, obligingly lent to us by Mr. Vetzel, we found many buildings and places in ours which had ceased to exist. Of others the names had undergone a

change. For instance, in the earlier map the Malakoff is styled the Volokoff, a designation it owed to the fact that a Russian naval officer had committed suicide upon its summit. We determined, therefore, to put our own plan aside until we became well acquainted with the existing state of the town, when, instead of being puzzling, the difference between the two would be found interesting. We eagerly traced the route which we had just taken. The first earthworks we had seen were those of the Garden Battery. The ruins on the larger and higher plateau proved to be those of the Flag-staff Bastion, one of the five great forts, the capture of anyone of which General Todleben had declared would carry with it the fall of the place. The further lines were, as we had rightly conjectured, those occupied by the French, and the cone which we had remarked as having an appearance of importance, was Mount Rudolpho. We also discovered that the ridge of hill immediately behind our garden was the highest ground in Sebastopol, on which stood the Naval Library, the scene of so much anxiety and so many discussions.

Between the water and the sea a large square was marked, with a church and buildings of considerable size. This we believed to be the

Theatre Square, but the decision was reserved for the future. It was pleasant to dine in the open air. Instead of inhaling the fumes of meat and vegetables in a close room, we were surrounded by a sweet almondy odour, and our eyes were charmed by the beauty of an oléander which was a mass of rich pink blossom. The birds perched upon the acacia boughs looked down upon us with an air of wisdom, and a newly-fledged family of sparrows, innocent of evil, came fluttering up with open bills, sure of being fed; while a large flock of geese were hissing at a wicket-gate, anxious to be allowed to pass to their own quarters, where supper, as they well knew, geese though they were, awaited them. The dog winked at us out of a kennel, and the family cat sat by licking her paws. The mere fact of sitting in a garden was delightful; it was a treat we had enjoyed but once since the previous Autumn, and that was when sunning ourselves in the gold and purple-fringed pleasure-grounds at Gottenburg. In dusty Muscovy the only out-of-door flowers were those grown in the cemeteries.

After dinner we sauntered forth to seek the sea. We passed what remained of the club-house. The walls of the basement story, with here and there a gap, still stood erect. It must have

been a very handsome building. There was no woodwork left, and weeds were growing where the flooring had been, and the beautiful white stone, which, Mr. Vetzel had told us at dinner, was quarried at Inkermann, although overthrown and splintered, was as pure as if it had just been worked. In England such ruins would have been picturesque with ivy and mosses and lichens, and a thousand other green things; but this dry climate admitted of no such adornment, and what struck us at every turn was the perfectly fresh appearance of the broken stone. We crossed the square, the church of which had disappeared; the large buildings were replaced by low mean cottages; but to our left the Doric peristyle rose pure and beautiful. We passed over some ground covered with rubbish, and down a steep bank to the rocky shore, which we found encumbered by immense masses of brick and masonry, the remains of Fort St. Nicholas. Once the strongest fort in all the Russias, it had possessed three ranges of bastions, which were dressed by no less than two hundred and sixty guns. This stronghold having been blown up, it was impossible to trace its form, but for at least half a mile its ruins lay heaped along the shore.

Between the jagged rocks strips of pure

white shell-strewn sand lay at the bottom of clear pools, and delicate sea-weeds, red and brown and green, waved to and fro. We found a basin where with every beat of the great ocean the water ebbed and flowed, and when a wave of greater magnitude than usual came soughing underneath, it forced up a jet of water which spurted up high into the air, to fall back in feathery spray. No human being came to interrupt our meditations; we sat on a piece of the dismantled fort, and tried to picture to ourselves the events which had taken place around. Opposite was the low and rocky northern shore of the roadstead, running out far into the sea; its extremity crowned by the low, round, casemated fort of Constantine. A shot over the water, fired from the spot we occupied, and pointed a little inland, would have hit the Severnaya, or Star-fort, called by Sir Howard Douglas the key of Sebastopol. "Until we secure that," he said, "we can never hope to take the place."

Further up, the batteries we read of as "Number Four," stretch into the water, and then the undulating steppe, intersected by deep grips, terminating in bluffs and broken ground, which sink into the sea. To the right we looked over the mouth of the Man-of-war Harbour to the

Karabel Faubourg, which terminates in the fort of St. Paul; the Karabel Faubourg being dominated by the sloping hill, which is crowned by the fort of the Malakoff.

Following the water line, we could perceive the entrance to Careenage Port, and beyond that again the valley of the Tchernaya, which appeared to be closed by the heights of Inkermann.

To our left there was an extensive bay, with short spurs stretching into it, which had once bristled with the artillery of the Alexander and Quarantine forts. The curving shore afforded a glimpse into the Quarantine Harbour, after which came a rocky headland, and so good-bye to the land view.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sunset—Bathing Establishment—A Dilemma—The Market of Sebastopol—Profuse Display of Fruit—the Vineyards of Kherson—Korniloff and the Russian Gunners—Prince Mentschikoff—Naval Library—Monument of Admiral Istamin—Sea View—The Tchernaya—Heights of Inkermann—Cathedral of St. Vladimir—A Cemetery—Evening Hymn of the Soldiers—Town of Kherson—Legend of the Daughter of Lamachus.

IN our minds the name of Sebastopol was so associated with ideas of sorrow, anxiety, or turmoil, and all the terrors of war, that it seemed almost impossible that we should be sitting there so peacefully upon its strand, quietly watching the sun sink into the sea. We found these sunsets a source of great delight; they were so grand—lovely they could scarcely be called, they were too fierce for so soft an epithet. The horizon would be streaked with the most ardent red, saffron, and yellow, which intensified in hue

as the dusk came on, casting a lurid light upon the dark sea and the white forts. If scarlet be likened to the sound of a trumpet, these colours might be compared to the deep growl of some enraged lion. We sat in silence until the charm was broken by my companion's laying her hand on mine and saying, "Is it true? Are we really in Sebastopol?" Turning towards home, we saw the two bright lights upon the heights of Inkermann, where they are placed to guide the ships which enter the roadstead. The passage is narrowed by dangerous reefs of rock, and upon a stormy night these lights must be kept precisely in line one above the other, in order to enter the channel with safety.

The birds were singing in Korniloff's garden when, throwing back the shutters at five o'clock in the morning, the early sunshine streamed through the open window. Intending to remain for two or three weeks in Sebastopol, we were anxious to profit by the sea-bathing, as well as to make excursions at our leisure, and, the middle of the day being very hot, we determined to resume the Summer habits of our Roman days, and sleep the sunny hours away. Our good little Etna soon boiled the water—for we made our own chai night and morning—and, by six o'clock, we were crossing the square

in search of the bathing-establishment. It was only a few yards beyond the Catherine steps, and consisted of a wooden gallery built upon piles, surrounded by cabins, and enclosing a patch of clear green sea.

We paid twopence each for the tickets, which gave us the freedom of the place, but found ourselves in a dilemma. No bathing-dresses were to be had; they are not the fashion in Russia. Early as was the hour, there were a good many ladies and children about, and as our insular prejudices rendered some sort of garment indispensable, we agreed to retain our robes of linen. The water was deliciously cool and refreshing; the white sand looked like a silver floor; and, peeping through the piles, we caught sight of the sea (it was deep blue out there), which was racing up to the head of the Man-of-war Harbour at a spanking pace. Regaining our cabin, dilemma the second was to be surmounted. Being constrained to leave our wet garments behind us, there was nothing for it but to dress without these articles; and, at the end of a long morning's walk, we came to the conclusion that beds and chemises, basins which hold water, and a variety of things looked upon as necessaries in our little island, were, in reality, nothing but luxuries, and we

congratulated ourselves on having "made such an experience and got rid of a prejudice."

Nearly opposite to the bathing-establishment, there stood a large, low house—a one-storied building, with diminuitive windows and a court-yard in the middle, which had somewhat the air of a caravansary. This house, a relic of former days, had seen grand doings in its time, having received Catherine the Great and Prince Potemkin during their celebrated visit to this locality. It was now a house of entertainment, and had the honour of sheltering Monsieur, Madame, *et ma Nièce*, and very glad we were that they had not settled themselves at the Hôtel Vetzel. We took our way straight across the open square, bound for the market, which lay at the distance of a mile and a quarter along the bay, and passed into a wide, unpaved street, once the shopping quarter of the town. The only shop we now noticed there was a general warehouse, which appeared to contain a little of everything, a considerable portion of its contents being placed outside the door. The market was large, and consisted of three streets; the first devoted to butchers, grocers, low drinking-houses, and such like places, which had every appearance of thriving. We did not linger in it, but passed on to the

other avenues, which were fitted up on each side with wooden cabins and stalls. Our eyes were charmed by the variety of colour and rich profusion of luscious fruit. The wonderful variety of melons and gourds would have made a study for an artist, along with the glowing heaps of tomatoes; and, as for the nuts, they were so singularly large and fine as to illustrate well the size and flavour they are celebrated for attaining in the Crimea. There they lay in clusters, snugly ensconced in great tufts of green, a little singed by the fervour of the sun, the very sight of them making us long to go a-nutting. And then such grapes!—purple and blue, tawny and white, sun-speckled and clear, bright green and opaque. The latter we knew would yield a juice with a delicious Muscat flavour. For this fruit we paid from three to five sous a pound, probably double its value—but we could not expect to make a good bargain by holding up our fingers and counting upon them.

The neighbourhood of Kherson was once famous for its vineyards. Numerous ancient cellars, well stocked with amphoræ, have been discovered; and, some years ago, an inscription on stone was found, which recorded that the people of Kherson had voted a crown of ivy to

Agorikletos, "who had made the cultivation of the vine to flourish in the country." As we had bought six pounds of grapes, we were obliged to carry the bundle by turns. The sun was very hot, and the cool of the shade under the acacia tree, where our *déjeuner* was spread, proved most refreshing. To us the place was haunted by the shade of Korniloff. How often must he have sat and mused in this very spot: how the old acacia must have trembled on that memorable 17th of October, when, with the dawning light, Sebastopol beheld many a gun in position! The three appointed signal shells shot up from Mount Rodolph, the city beat to arms, the Russian cannon began to roar, the English guns pealed forth. What an awakening! The instant he heard the cannonade, Korniloff sprang upon the charger he bestrode so well, and galloped to the Flag-staff Bastion. The air was thick and lurid. "Calm and stern," says one of the chroniclers of the Crimean war, "was his expression of face; his thin and slightly bent form had become erect. 'This is indeed a brave fellow,' cried the soldiers, as he passed the Quarantine Bastion." The precious moments fled, but, before breaking his fast, Korniloff wrote a line to his wife, and, enclosing along with it a watch he prized, an

heirloom in his family, he sent the packet off to Nikolaef, the headquarters of the Black Sea fleet. Then came the disaster which blew up one of the French magazines, and at half-past ten Mount Rodolph was silent.

About that time Prince Mentschikoff, who was hovering near, stopped at Korniloff's door (our door), requesting that the Admiral would join him. The two proceeded as far as the Catherine landing-place, where Mentschikoff got into a boat and left Sebastopol; and Korniloff, crossing the square, rode along Catherine Street, and returned to the Flagstaff Bastion. He met crowds with litters bearing away the wounded and the dead; they could not be cleared away fast enough. Still he was somewhat cheered by hearing of the disaster in the French batteries. Meeting Todleben at the head of the Man-of-War Harbour, the "body and the mind" of the defence held converse together, after which the patient and indefatigable hero proceeded to the Karabel Faubourg, to the Redan, and then to the Malakoff, where he was cheered by the seamen. The cries, however, were silenced by Korniloff. "When the English batteries are as silent as the French yonder," he said, pointing to the crest of Mount Rodolph, "then we will cheer."

He inspected the ground-floor of the Malakoff, which he wished to have arranged as a hospital; and then, in spite of danger, he mounted to the top. "Now let us move on," he said on descending; "we will just go to those battalions, the Bouter and the Borodino, and afterwards go home by the hospital road." He had but taken three steps when his thigh was shattered by a round shot. At the moment he spoke but two words, "Defend Sebastopol!" Contriving at the same time to throw the maimed body, which those around him feared to touch, upon a litter, he was carried to the hospital, enduring paroxysms of horrible pain, and from time to time uttering short sentences, farewells to his family. "O God, bless Russia and the Emperor! Save Sebastopol, and the fleet!" Hearing a report that the English guns were silenced, he partly raised himself, and crying, "Hurrah! hurrah!" fell back and ceased to breathe.

My companion, declaring that it was too hot to venture out again, retired to write letters; whilst I, feeling more actively inclined, set forth to explore the hill at the back of the house. A public garden called the Boulevart runs along it. At the end of the latter there is a mound on which stands the Naval Library. The pleas-

ure-ground is gained by five flights of stone stairs ornamented by balustrades, which were sadly damaged; one great corner-stone, still in position, was turned half round. A cannon ball had dented the hard substance and split it into stars. At the summit there was a shrubbery, with benches and a few flowers, in the middle of which stood a remarkably ugly monument, in the shape of a galley, erected to the memory of Admiral Lazaref.

The Library, a building of no great size, is surmounted by a dome, which was once used as an observatory. The door stood open, and two or three passage rooms led to an octagonal chamber, the windows of which commanded an extensive panoramic view over land and sea. What high hearts had beaten there! What discussions its walls could tell of! There was the very table at which the officers were sitting upon that September day when one of them carelessly took up a glass, looked over the sea, and beheld a cloudy streak of black which obscured the horizon. (I gazed through the same window—the sky line was clear enough now.) The appearance was at once pronounced to be the smoke from a fleet of steamers, and at noon a telegram from Tchernaya confirmed the idea. It was from this spot that the Russians first caught

sight of red-coated English soldiers as they descended from the Mackenzie Heights into the valley of the Tchernaya; and it was also from the Naval Library that rejoicing Sebastopol learnt that there were seams along the crest of Mount Rodolph—a sure sign that the allies had determined upon a siege.

Sitting down outside, I sought to make myself acquainted, through the map, with the principal features around. The sea-view was superb; wherever the water penetrated into the land, there it lay dark and blue, like highly-tempered steel. I perceived that our part of the town was situated upon a sharp point, which stretched out into the roadstead; this, and the spit terminating the Karabel Faubourg, forming the mouth of the Man-of-war Harbour. The view was, with the exception of the ever-changing ocean, more curious than beautiful. The Severnaya is a barren steppe, which swells gradually up and terminates in the white cliffs of the Inkermann heights. The Karabel Faubourg is a mass of colourless ruin, situated at the foot of a hill, which, sloping gently to a plateau, had no air of importance, as seen from the height upon which I stood. It was difficult to credit that the scarcely discernible ruins upon its summit were the remains of the world-renowned fortress

of the Malakoff. Its almost humble appearance presented a striking contrast to the scene, so often pictured, of a tall white tower, situated upon almost perpendicular cliffs, round which Zouaves, with glittering bayonets, are swarming, like wasps upon a honey-pot. The Redan stood up stony and brown upon the other side of a deep grip, or balka, as it would be called in the Crimea. The unsatisfied eye rested without pleasure upon the monotonous whity-grey of the ruined town, where, with the exception of the cathedral of St. Vladimir, still in the course of construction, scarcely a church was standing. The cupolas of St. Vladimir had not yet been spread with flashing gold or enlivening green, and the dull hue of the rolling steppes, whose carpet of fine herbage had lost its Summer freshness, did not redeem the landscape. But the great sea arms and pointed fingers, wherever they embraced the land, shone forth with a glorious glancing blue. The glare was painful, and with aching eyes I scrambled down the steep hill, entered the garden by the wicket gate, and mounted upstairs, to find our room in darkness, and my companion wrapped in profound slumber.

The beautiful peristyle, and the balustraded steps which descended to the water, were

pleasant places of evening resort. The Man-of-war Harbour still looks alive; a ferry-boat crosses over it to the Karabèl Faubourg, near the point of which there is a large Russian cemetery. A great pyramid occupies the centre, on the top of which is reared a cross, which glitters from afar. This was erected to the memory of those who died in defence of the city. The inscriptions upon it are naturally in the Russian character, and we regretted that we were unable to read them. Near this ruin a long low line of barracks, and when we heard the rappel beat, we used to steal into some quiet nook, in order to listen to the evening hymn of the soldiers, which came floating over the water with the most soothing effect.

Being anxious to explore the ruins of Kherson, the theatre of such romantic and varied events, we begged Mr. Vetzel to engage a carriage for the following day. The Heraclean Chersonese was so named when, in the seventh century, B.C., the Heracleans, Dorian colonists from the opposite shore of the Black Sea, migrated from their settlement and established themselves on the peninsula. And a very nice little district they made of it. It is calculated that a population of at least 50,000 souls was planted there. The part they appropriated

closely resembles a mitre in shape. Along the base they built a wall which sloped gently from the Tchernaya, a little above Inkermann, to the harbour of Balaclava, and may still be traced. This served to defend them from the attacks of their bitter enemies, the fierce Tauri, as well as from the marauding Scythians. The curving sides of the territory were protected by sea and river, the whole enclosure being thickly sprinkled with villages, villas, gardens, and vineyards.

The town of Kherson was placed upon a high plateau, formed at the top of a stupendous cliff, which, jutting abruptly forth into the water, sheltered the western side of the Quarantine Bay. This great city had a Greek period, a Roman period, and a Sclavonic period. Under the Ruski Princes, and previous to the French occupation, the remains of each were considerable. The Russian government had taken unusual pains in excavating and collecting together the relics of the past which lay scattered around. Alas! under the French occupation this collection and many remaining buildings disappeared, the stones proving useful for various purposes.

Taking our *déjeuner* at an earlier hour than usual, in order to have the early morning at our

disposal, we stowed ourselves and our ample provision of books and maps away in the small open carriage provided by our host. The strong little horse attached to it appeared to be up to anything, and the whity-brown "laddie," its driver, nodded good-humouredly as he received Mr. Vetzel's instructions as to what was to be done with his cargo. Off we set, passing through the square, and from thence into a dilapidated suburb, encumbered by crumbling houses of a poor description. What with the frequent balkas, and the sea-creeks which pierce the shore, the Chersonese would be awkward ground for a steeplechase, and we had gradually to turn inland in order to round the Artillery and other bays. All beauty of scenery is confined to the coast line, and the country became very dreary as we advanced along the stony road, or track, for in these days it is scarcely more. To the right we obtained occasional glimpses of the deep blue sea; whilst, to the left, the everlasting steppes rolled on, occasionally swelling up into small hills, amongst which Mount Rodolph stood prominently forth, and we saw with great distinctness the earthworks erected by the French siege-corps. A dreary hour, even in that fine morning, it was before we rounded Streletska

Bay; but, after passing its muddy head, our nag pricked up his ears, and, having heard Mr. Vetzel's plan of the campaign, turned his nose to the north.

Forty minutes more brought us to some mounds near to the brow of the cliff, and we drew up upon the site of ancient Kherson. Gone, however, was the beautiful temple in which the Greeks placed the statue of their huntress Queen, the poetic successor of the fierce Tauric Diana, the terrible goddess who frowned down over the stormy waters, looking for the tempest-tossed bark which would bring her fresh victims. Leaving our trap high and dry in a bean-field, we proceeded, with the assistance of Mr. Seymour's map, to trace the walls of the Greek city. In some garden-ground, ill secured against intruders by a gate which had fallen off its hinges, in the midst of a badly-cultivated vegetable-garden, stood a large building, evidently once of importance. Now it might be a farm, or it might be a monastery; not a human being could we see. We peered about for dogs, of which, fortunately, there were none, but came to the conclusion that the house was inhabited, probably by monks, who were indulging in their mid-day *siesta*. We regarded with veneration the great

stones of which this building was composed; they were doubtless quarried from the ancient city. The plateau rose towards the sea, and upon it cropped up stumps of old wall. On the brow of the cliff, standing clearly out against the mid-day sky, were the unmistakeable remains of a gateway. This was no less than the private gateway of Lamachus, once chief magistrate of Kherson. My companion, who delighted to perch upon the most dangerous places she could find, passed between the fallen masses of hewn stone, and, standing upon the giddy brink of the precipice, caught sight of the rock-cut steps which wound down to the ancient port.

Respecting the daughter of Lamachus a strange story is told, and several writers believe it to be true. It is somewhat lengthy, but it will be best given in Mr. Seymour's own words. It must be remembered, however, that no class of men ever hated one another with a more bitter hatred than did the Ionian settlers, who fought under the griffin of Panticapæum, and the Dorians, who combated with the stag for their emblem. The histories of various victories, and the defeats of many centuries, are handed down to us, recorded upon armour, ornaments of gold and electrum, and painted

upon funeral vases and domestic pottery.

It happened that, as late as the year of our era 334, Asander, last king of the Bosphorus, "asked in marriage, for one of his sons, the daughter of Lamachus, the Stephanóphorus, or chief magistrate of Kherson, the most powerful man in the town, famous for his riches in gold, silver, slaves, serving-women, horses, and lands. He also possessed a house with four courts, occupying all one quarter of the town, lying near the exterior part of the Bay of Soses, now Streletska Bay" (called, later on, the Quarantine Bay), "where he had a private door pierced in the walls of the town, which is the only one now remaining entire" (but this was written before the French occupation). "Four magnificent gateways guarded the approaches to his house, and each herd of oxen and cows, horses and mares, sheep and asses, returning from pasture, had its own particular entrance and stables. The eldest of the sons of Asander married Glycia, the daughter of Lamachus, under the express condition that he should never return to Panticapæum to visit his father, not even at the hour of his death.

About two years after Lamachus died, and Glycia, the following year, wished, according to the general custom, on the anniversary of her

father's death, to give a grand feast to all the people of Kherson. Her riches were sufficient to provide them all with wine, bread, oil, meat, poultry, and fish, and she promised to renew this festival each year. The son of Asander, deeply vexed at such prodigality, pretended to praise her filial affection, but secretly determined to revenge himself by seizing this occasion to hatch a plot against the town. He wrote to his father to send him from time to time a dozen young Bosphorians, strong and active, to be introduced into the city under pretext of a visit. Disembarking at the port of Symbals (Balaclava), where they left their vessel, they came on foot to Kherson, spent some days there, and then, pretending to return, passed out at the great gate in the evening, and crossed the Chersonese. But when night came on they retraced their steps by circuitous paths, till they reached the Great Harbour (Sevastopol), where a boat was in readiness to bring them round to the front of the Bay of Soses on the other side. Here a friend expected them, and opened for them the little door into the house of Lamachus. Concealed in the vast palace, they waited for the next anniversary, in order to seize the town,

and massacre the people, overcome by wine and good cheer. A lucky accident, however, caused their treachery to be discovered. On the eve of the feast one of the servants of Glycia, having disobeyed her mistress, was shut up in a distant chamber, which happened to be just above that in which the Bosphorians were concealed. The loss of her spindle, which rolled into a hole near the wall, induced the girl to lift up a square of the floor in search of it. She then saw the Bosphorians assembled, and hastened to inform her mistress, who forgave her fault, and told her to keep the secret until she could be prepared to deal with the traitors. She then, in strict confidence, conferred with three delegates from the town, and having made them swear that, in recompense for her patriotism, they would, contrary to established custom, bury her inside the town, she communicated to them the astounding news, and gave them directions how to act. She made them celebrate the festival gaily, as if nothing was to happen, and only bid each man prepare some faggots and torches; then, having drugged her husband's wine, and escaped from the house with her maids, carrying her trinkets and gold, she ordered the faggots to be

piled round the house and fired, leaving the traitors to perish in the flames. The citizens of Kherson wished to rebuild the house at the public expense; but this Glycia strongly opposed, and, on the contrary, ordered them to heap up every kind of filth and refuse on the place stained by treachery, which was ever afterwards called 'The Den of Lamachus.' The Khersonians raised two statues of brass on the public place, in honour of Glycia, in one of which she was represented, modestly and carefully attired, receiving the three deputies of the town; and in the other she appears clothed in warlike garments, in the act of avenging the betrayed citizens. At the time when Constantine Porphyrogenitus wrote the account from which this has been extracted, every citizen considered it his duty to keep clean and bright the inscription which the gratitude of the city had caused to be engraven upon her monument."

Historians really appear to credit this curious story; and, on the space which there is every reason to believe was once occupied by the markets of the town, there really does exist a vast mound of rubbish, which the Tartars, in their tongue, call the Den of Lamachus. There is

also no doubt that the *débris* of which it consists does belong to that period, many morsels of rude pottery having Greek characters stamped upon them.

CHAPTER IX.

Lieutenant Kruse—Search for Antiquarian Remains—Legend of St. Clement—Submarine Temple—Siege of Kherson by Vladimir I.—Site of the Palace of Vladimir—Remains of the Cathedral—The Nicholas Battery—A Mystery Solved—Quarantine Harbour—Visit to Inkermann—Roadstead of Sebastopol—Rock-cut Dwellings of the Chersonese—Crypt Chambers—Rock-cut Greek Church—The Tauro-Scythians.

SOME excavator of this century, probably the Russian, Lieutenant Kruse, has opened a lane which pierces far into the mound; and as we stood in it, we calculated that it rose on either side some fourteen feet above our heads. Here was a delightful opportunity for grubbing. We got some sharp splinters of bone to serve as tools, and set to work to dig out bits of earthenware. The handles and bottoms of jugs were plentiful, but none of those we examined were marked with any lettered characters. We kept one or two specimens, which were marked

by a zig-zag in black, painted upon a red ground. Bones as hard as iron and as smooth as ivory stuck out of the loose soil, and morsels of glass, which might have been chipped out of a rainbow, so glorious were the colours; but, alas! they were also as evanescent, and faded to nothing in our hands. How we longed for a spade and a pick-axe, having visions of Etruscan wares and rare pieces of marble; although why we should expect to find either in a dust-heap was not quite clear.

At last we roamed off to find traces of an earlier period. Some three hundred years before Glycia appeared upon the scene, Kherson was under the sway of the Romans, who seemed to have used it as a penal settlement. During their rule it was the scene of a legend, the events of which are vividly depicted, in fresco, upon the walls of the crypt of St. Clement's in Rome. This saint was the disciple of St. Peter and St. Paul, and third bishop of Rome. He was hated by the Pagan governor, who, during the absence of Trajan, in his expedition against the Dacians, banished him to a distant colony, where he was employed to hew stone, along with other prisoners. They suffered cruelly from the want of water, which had to be brought from a great distance (probably from Balaclava).

Moved with compassion, the saint knelt down and prayed, and suddenly raising his eyes, he saw a lamb standing upon the summit of a rising ground, which remained invisible to all but himself. He knew that it was the Lamb of God. Therefore St. Clement took a pickaxe, and went before the people to the hill, and, digging there, a clear and abundant stream gushed forth. This miracle only the more incensed his enemies, and they ordered him to be bound to an anchor, and cast into the sea; but at the prayers of the Christian disciples, the sea withdrew for the space of three miles, and they discovered a ruined temple, which had been formerly buried by the waters. Within it was found the body of St. Clement, with the anchor round his neck. Now this miracle took place at Kherson, and every year, upon the anniversary of his martyrdom, the sea retired during seven days, leaving a path for those who went to honour the relics of the saint.

It is also related that a woman, accompanied by her son, being at prayer within the temple, her child fell asleep, and the sea suddenly rising, the mother fled. She passed the year in bitter grief—in tears and supplications; but the next year, returning to the shrine, she found her son there, asleep, just as she had left him. Evidence

of the truth of this miracle was found as late as the time of Vladimir, for he is said to have recovered the body of the saint, and removed it to Kieff, which is probably the reason why the submarine temple is visible no longer. It must be confessed that Kherson is not wanting in curious legends.

Pursuing our way, intent now upon the Russian period, we made a little détour, in order to avoid a solitary man, who was perched upon the very verge of the cliff. How did we know that he might not have Tauric blood in his veins, and that some inherited inclination might not induce him to sacrifice us strangers to the goddess of his ancestors? Vladimir I. laid siege to Kherson in the year of our Lord 988, but he found the inhabitants strong and obstinate. "I swear," he said, "that if you do not surrender, I will remain here three years." This threat producing no effect upon the Khersonians, he endeavoured to take the town by assault. The besiegers threw earth into the ditches, but the besieged quickly sallied forth, and taking it away, brought it into the middle of their town (it is to be hoped that they did not thereby raise the mound attributed to the friends of Glycia); and all might have gone well, had not a traitor, named Athanasius, shot

into the enemy's camp an arrow bearing this inscription: "Thou canst stop or turn aside the source of the springs behind thee, towards the east; it is thence that the waters of the town are brought to us." "If this be true," cried Vladimir, "I promise to receive baptism." There were tanks at Kherson, but the only certain supply of water was that conducted from a spring called Kouter Oukhak, not far from Balaclava. In the whole of the Chersonese there are but two springs, and it has been suggested that, if it had been possible for the Allies to have invested Sebastopol, that city, like Kherson, might have fallen from drought.

Vladimir, having established himself in Kherson, asked for the Princess Anne in marriage, the sister of the Emperors Basil and Constantine. His request was granted, upon the condition of his receiving baptism, and the princess, on her arrival, was grandly received at the ancient port. It must be remembered that the Sclavonic translation of the New Testament, along with the whole of the Psalter, had been made a century before by Cyril and Methodius, and was ready for the use of the clergy who accompanied the princess, and that churches had already been planted in the Crimea.

The Russian officer, Lieutenant Kruse, investigated the churches at Kherson, two of which must have been almost perfect, the semicircular apse existing in one of them, the seats for the clergy in the other, along with the Byzantine crosses which ornamented the Cipolino pillars. We came to the conclusion that these buildings had been converted into store-houses or barns, and one of them stood upon a high mound near the garden which we had invaded.

The supposed site of the palace of Vladimir abutted upon the market-place, and near it he is said to have erected, on the mound formed by the earth withdrawn by the besieged from the ditches, the cathedral in which he received baptism; and even in its present state we fancied that we were able to trace some resemblance between it and the exterior of the church at Kertch. The upper part of the walls had evidently been repaired with stray pieces of marble and sculptured stone. There was no means of entering, the small doorway being filled up with rubbish; nor could we trace anything like windows, which confirmed us in the idea that this building had been a Greek church, and lighted from a cupola, which had disappeared. But it would have been satisfactory if we could

have learnt a little more respecting the edifice.

The broad main street of the ancient town is clearly visible. It had been paved with large slabs of stone, and it was most interesting to trace the winding alleys which led from it, and the foundations of the houses. The position of the doorways, and even the very shape of the rooms, may be clearly observed. What a curious history is that of Kherson! Beginning, as far as we know, with the mysterious rites and sacrifices offered to the cruel Tauric Diana, and embracing, in the long succession of ages, the various periods and incidents of the more polished worship bestowed upon her Grecian namesake; the pictured fights between the stag and the griffin; the story of St. Clement, his labours and his repose in the submerged temple; the vengeance of Glycia; the conversion of Vladimir, and the splendid reception given to his Byzantine princess. If there could arise a modern Homer, what a series of poems might be suggested to him by such varied events!—events which throw a halo of romance round the very name of Kherson. But although traditions cling round a spot, nothing lasts for ever in this world; and after two thousand years of magnificent prosperity, Kherson was destroyed by the Lithuanians; centuries after

which its stones were stolen by the Russians, and its relics finally scattered by slim-waisted, red-trousered French soldiers. Will another great city ever arise upon this ancient site? We had plenty of time to speculate upon this theme during our homeward drive, and were even able to take a dip in the sea after our arrival, before dinner.

The evening we spent delightfully amongst the rocks, picking up shells and sea-weed, and scrambling about the huge wreck of the Nicholas Battery, which appeared to have been built of very rough rubble and cement, the stone casing of which had been removed. The night was so warm that, with the faintest indication of dawn, I got up to open the window, and, looking down into the garden, was startled at the sight of something like a pall which covered the dinner-table, and, on looking again with more attention, there appeared, in fact, to be something like a human form beneath it. Half frightened and half asleep, my first thought was—Is it Korniloff who is lying there?—my second that the corpse of some one had been placed on the table preparatory to interment. I got back into bed as quickly as possible, and after a time fell asleep.

When I woke again the sun was streaming

in, the garden looked refreshed by its night's repose, and the table was just as usual. Had I been dreaming? If so, my dream was unusually vivid. Perhaps the body might have been already removed for early burial. My companion was most incredulous and unsympathising, declaring that the vision I had seen was nothing but fancy. She almost persuaded me out of the evidence of my senses. However, when the ancient serving-maid entered with the water, the mystery was solved, and in a very simple manner—Mr. Vetzel slept upon the table in the garden; and I was triumphant, having really seen a body stretched upon it.

After bathing, we, as usual, visited the fruit-market, near to which lie the vast ruins of the Artillery Fort. The earthworks, the ditches, platforms, walls, and heaps of rubble, appeared to be endless. The deep Balka, which runs between it and Fort Alexander, admitting the sea, forms the Artillery Bay, in which lay the merchant vessels which came to take in or discharge cargo; and the perpendicular rocks had to be removed by blasting, in order to afford space for the quays and warehouses, now reduced to long rows of useless skeletons. A profound grip upon its eastern side isolated Fort Alexander, then came Quarantine Sea-fort,

and another rent in the torn cliffs allowed the water to pierce far inland, this great sea-finger being the Quarantine Harbour. On the rapidly-rising steppe behind is the dismantled land Quarantine Battery; and higher still, on the brow of another Balka, the central bastion. The prodigious size and strength of these numerous fortifications has quite a bewildering effect upon one. From no other side of the town is the former prodigious strength of Sebastopol so perceptible; and Nature, with her deep bays, profound ravines, and precipitous cliffs, has done for it almost as much as art.

We discovered a new way home in the course of our morning's stroll, and, turning off the dusty road, mounted a winding path, which led through the vineyard of Bardack. Formerly it had been carefully cultivated, but that time had passed away, and it was now a wilderness where nature alone reigned supreme. Seen from this height, the wide expanse of blue water, the curving coast, the great sea arms, with their freight of many vessels, and the distant cliffs of Inkermann, made a charming picture, bathed, as they were, in the mild glory of the morning sunshine, which lent the colour sorely needed by the white town and monotonous brown steppes.

Breakfast was always welcome after these

strolls, for by the time it arrived we had earned the right to be hungry as well as to rest, and our solitude was seldom intruded upon at that hour. Although we were the only foreign visitors in the house, the apartments adjoining our room were occupied by a lady and her two daughters, large, grim women, in voluminous flounces of muslin. They were uninteresting people, knowing little about the country, although they were in the habit of visiting Sebastopol every year, and caring less. But they were inclined to be very sociable. The elder lady proved to be the aunt of the invalid in whom we had taken so great an interest, and we were concerned to hear that he had been unable to procure the fermented mare's milk on which he had counted.

We hastened our *déjeuner* a little this morning, in order to see the Odessa steamer come in. It brought grist to the hotel in the shape of three official personages, who, taking possession of the long table, covered it with maps and plans, which they pored eagerly over. Was the Russian Government about to re-fortify Sebastopol surreptitiously? However that might be, to us the immediate consequence was that our dinner had to be spread upon a small table under the oleander instead of the acacia.

Coming in from bathing next morning, we consulted Mr. Vetzel as to the best way of reaching Inkermann. He told us that the land journey was long and fatiguing, the country being so cut up by ravines, but that the water-trip was easy and pleasant. We asked him to order a boat for us; but this he declined, saying that the easiest plan would be for us to go down to the harbour at the foot of the Catherine Stairs, and that at the word "Inkermann" we should find a dozen men ready to take us. We did as we were bid, and, making a point at a good-sized, comfortable-looking boat, a man with only one eye, and much marked by the smallpox, sprang out of a group of loungers, and the word "Inkermann" resulted in the immediate production of oars and cushions.

As soon as we were seated, our new friend, with long swinging strokes, sent the boat across the Man-of-war Harbour, called by the Tartars the Kartaly Katche, or Bay of the Vulture. We glided past the mouth of "The Bay of the Vessels," and, rounding the extreme point of the Karabel Faubourg, on which stood the battery of St. Paul, we cut into the magnificent roadstead. This arm of the sea is from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet in width; it

runs up for nearly five miles into the land, and is occasionally very rough. As we progressed, our ideas of Sebastopol enlarged considerably. Keeping well to the left, we skirted along the shore by a rising ground which swelled, in a leisurely way, up into the high round hill of the Malakoff. The importance of the position is at once perceived from the roadstead. It was divided by a deep balka from another elevation, the spur of which formed one point of the Careening Bay.

The scenery here became very pretty. The distant northern shore, as it sloped up to the heights of Inkermann, was bare and arid, but the southern side was intersected by ravines shaggy with dwarf oak and scrub, whilst across the level stretched the white and ruined arches of the aqueduct. Further on again the steep limestone cliffs had been blasted, in order to afford space for a road between them and the water. Near this point we saw, for the first time, some specimens of the curious rock-cut dwellings which riddle the cliffs of the Chersonese. They must have been places of great security, the lowest story—and there were three ranges of chambers—being at least twenty feet from the ground, without any external steps or galleries. These were the

only excavations we saw with any attempt at outside ornamentation. Having at the moment no time to land and examine them, we promised ourselves that pleasure upon a future occasion.

The vivid green of the flat ground at the mouth of the Tchernaya Retchka betrayed the marshy nature of the soil, which spreads malaria around, but is most favourable for the sportsman, snipe, woodcock, and water-fowl being at certain seasons abundant. The white cliffs of the Inkermann heights were quite perpendicular, and the light-houses on their summit shot up tall and bare. The Tchernaya is a clear but narrow stream, and very weedy. When we turned into it we appeared to be making our way through beds of reeds and rushes. At our approach the land-tortoises, which had been sunning themselves on bits of rock, flopped into the water with the shriek and peculiar cry which reminded us of warmer climes. My companion, who had undertaken to steer, came to woe more than once, and was nearly putting an end to the excursion by landing us amongst the rushes, tall canes, and sedges. But the good-natured one-eyed waterman, winking violently with his remaining orb, pushed us back into our right course with a grin.

Drawing up at last by the side of a wooden erection which spanned the stream, and barred our further progress, we jumped on shore some mile and a half from Inkermann village, which lay along a white ridge, looking picturesque enough with its low houses and green-domed church. The cliffs to our right, on the summit of which lay the sloping plateau, the battle-plain of Inkermann, were pierced with square and oblong holes, the interior chambers which they led to and lighted being evidently inhabited. One crypt which opened from the ground was in use as a stable, and, in the chamber above, men were busy raising hay by means of a pulley. They paused to contemplate us, and their appearance was so rough that, instead of lingering, we hastened on. Past this spot the rocks had been blasted and quarried in order to furnish stone for the works at Sebastopol. Some of the crypt chambers exposed were surprisingly large, with pointed ceilings, ornamented up the seams by a rope pattern. These excavations probably date from the Middle Ages.

We had next our way to make across the valley, where a wide stone bridge (the bridge we read of) led to the other side of the Tchernaya. Close to it there was a small cemetery.

Like all the English cemeteries in the Crimea, it was enclosed by a very substantial stone wall, about five feet high. A flight of steps led to the top, and down again on the inside. There were no gates to fall into decay, and, if not disturbed by the hand of man, the walls may be standing without a flaw when the New Zealander roams over the site of St. Paul's. The appearance of the ground led us to suppose that a large pit had been dug in the centre, for there the ground had sunk, and the hollow was choked up by fig, wild vine, ash saplins, and brambles. We did not think that the ground had been tampered with—no stone told the story of those who lay below, and we concluded that they were the bodies of privates who had fallen on the bloody November field.

Over the bridge the flat meadows were prettily dotted with apple, and pear, and remarkably fine walnut-trees. Leaving the village to our right, we ascended a steep path cut in the side of the cliffs, which on this bank of the river are formed of a peculiar sort of white clay. The path led to a narrow, terraced garden, near which stood a square, prosaic-looking house. We wandered about, but no one was to be seen, and through the keyhole of a time-worn oaken door we got a glimpse of the interior of the

rock-cut Greek church. Anxious to obtain admittance, we looked about in all directions, and shouted so loud that at last a man emerged from an adjacent cave. He appeared to be half sacristan, half gardener, was very civil, and spoke a few words of French. Alas! he made us understand that ladies were not allowed to enter the sacred spot, the church belonging to a monastery. It was very provoking, but we were obliged to rest content with his description of the interior, and with longing looks through the keyhole, which fortunately was so large that we really gained a good idea of what it was like inside.

Mr. Fergusson, in his chapter upon rock-cut dwellings, mentions this excavation as being the largest crypt church in the Crimea. It is thirty feet in length, and in the form of a basilica, with square apartments attached. The symbol of the cross, he says, is so deeply cut in the screen between the pillars as to show that it must always have been destined for a place of Christian worship. He goes on to mention the series of rock-cut churches and cities which stretch from Kertch to Sebastopol, on the site of which numerous crypts have been destroyed. He considers that these excavations have served as dwellings, and not as tombs, and compares

them to those at Barmican, and further east.

Opening upon the terrace where we stood, and which had evidently been an ancient gallery, there ran a line of rock-cut chambers, one of which was now occupied by our guide. The room was small, and a good specimen of one of the earliest crypts. The floor at the end of the chamber was raised about a foot, forming a ledge two feet in width; and high up on each side a hole had been cut, in which probably a pole had been placed. This crypt, being, from the perfect state of the gallery, accessible, had very likely been inhabited from the earliest times, and subjected to modern innovation, for the lower part of the floor was level, which is not the case in those which have been for centuries disused, in consequence of their lofty position, or from the falling away of galleries in them. A hole, some two feet across, and one in depth, is found in the centre. This served for fireplace and oven. Another cause may also have led to the disturbance of these floors. The white clay of which they are formed has undergone some change, which renders it less brittle, more easily worked, and therefore of greater value than the clay immediately taken from the cliff. This substance is used to form the pipe-bowls which are so prettily carved, and

known in France by the name of *écume de mer*. The material is akin to a peculiar fatty sort of Fuller's-earth, found between Inkermann and Mangoup, sold in Constantinople for soap, and is used in the baths. There is a similar deposit upon the banks of the Alma. How strange such uses seem! And who, gazing upon a row of these pipes, set forth in shining order in some glittering Palais Royal window, would believe that the clay of which they are formed was taken from the floors of dwellings inhabited centuries before our era by the fierce Tauri, who dwelt "in the clefts" of the Crimean rocks. They were a powerful mountain people when, six hundred years before Christ, the Scythians first entered their territories. The two races fought it out, and at last mixed together, and so formed the Tauro-Scythians.

It is to be remarked that the most ancient excavations, those in which the Tauri dwelt, are cut, with little exception, in the face of rocks which are exposed to the south, whilst those of later date are exposed to colder aspects. But in the Middle Ages men had a *triste plaisir* in making themselves uncomfortable. Our guide's crypt, on the contrary, was quite luxurious. He had placed a mattress and pillow upon the ledge, erected a pole, which was slipped

into the ancient sockets, and suspended a curtain upon it, just as a Tauric family might have done two thousand years before. In addition he had glazed in the hole that served for window, which his predecessors had no means of doing, and declared that his abode was warm in Winter, and pleasantly cool in Summer. We entered several other chambers; they were all alike. Deeply cut into the rocky walls were numbers of square recesses. These we imagined to be the cupboards in which the fierce Tauric dames had stowed away their treasures. What strange articles might they not have contained! Embossed ornaments, perhaps, in gold, silver, or electrum, which had been drawn forth on great occasions, when the family arrayed themselves in their best, in order to assist at some human sacrifice, or assembled round their Diana to behold a knot of shipwrecked mariners hurled into the remorseless waves.

CHAPTER X.

Castle of Eupatoria—Genoese Castles—Mount Aithodor—Graves of the Crimea—A Souvenir of Inkermann—Village of Altir—Forts Constantine and Alexander—Scuttling of the Russian War-ships—Russian Sailors—Raising the Sunken Vessels—Mr. Gowan—Scorpions—A Pleasant Life—Canine Excursions—British Cemeteries in the Crimea—Monuments and Inscriptions—The Redan and the Malakoff—Tartars.

OUR guide undertook to show us the way to the Castle, the superstructure of which is Genoese, but the foundations were laid shortly before our era by Diophantes, who was sent by Mithridates to assist the Khersonians against the invasions of their enemies, the Tauro-Scythians. The original name of this castle was Eupatoria, but Catherine's blundering *savants* bestowed the appellation upon a distant place called Korloff. The dizzy promontory upon which the castle is placed juts out into the

valley, and is called by the Tartars the "Place of the Winds."

The base of this bold headland has, at some far-away period, been laved by the waves, and on each side there is a deep grip. The ascent from the terrace was considerable. The upward path led through a rent in the mountain, which our attendant had converted into a wild garden. He was very proud of his pinks; but his flowers were somewhat ungrateful, and did not appear to reward his care by blossoming freely—the situation being probably too dry for them. Towards the top the path came to an untimely end, and we had a regular scramble to gain the summit. My companion, however, reached the brow of the cliff in a few bounds, while I had to be ignominiously hauled over the ledge on to the green sward, which was wonderfully soft and elastic, and fragrant with the dried Crimean southernwood, the perfume of which had brought a waft of home to our soldiers during their toilsome marches. We traced long stretches of walls and ditches before reaching the principal ruins.

Nature and art had united to render this castle a place of prodigious strength; but these Genoese castles, though fine and extensive, are a little disappointing, from the untidy nature of

the material employed, coarse rubble thickly embedded in cement. In England the crumbling walls would have been clothed with ivy, but this dewless climate allowed no green thing to twine round the naked towers, which stood up stern and bare. Some of the staircases were in good condition; and, mounting up one, we looked over a vast extent of roofless courts and battlements. The view was splendid. The eye ranged over the wide plain, which was cheerful with verdant meadows and fruit-trees, bounded to the right by the heights of Inkermann, under which crept the silvery Tchernaya, until it mingled with the bright blue salt waters of the roadstead; while, far away, sudden depressions in the sinking steppe disclosed a belt of shining sea, ocean and sky being so alike in hue that they seemed to be welded together. In front the limestone rocks were perforated by many an ancient doorway, and screened by richly-wooded ravines, in which flourished the dwarf oak, the tender ash, and the silvery birch, which climbed and fringed the brow of the Cathcart heights. To the left, rose fold after fold of moor and hill, until the gaze rested upon the purple promontory of Mount Aithodor, the Cape of the Tempests, a stupendous cliff, fine in form and rich in colour, which, rising

abruptly from the plain, gathers the storm-cloud round its head. Elli Boroun, as the Tartars call it, must, one would imagine, at one period or other, have been washed by the ocean.

Our guide endeavoured to make us see the rocky eyrie on which Mangoup is placed; but, unless it was a black spot which we perceived upon the side of Mount Aithodor, it was beyond our ken. Descending into a sunny court, we suddenly came upon a row of graves. The headstones told that those buried beneath were French officers of rank and family. Poor fellows!—there they lay peacefully under the green sod. We speculated as to whether those whom death had brought together in the old castle had been friends in life. The graves of the Crimea make one very sad. A wall, some three feet in height, protected us from the sheer descent. Eastward the grip was so narrow that Diophantes had formed a project of connecting the opposite brinks by filling up the chasm with earth, leaving a tunnel for the bridge of stone which he erected over the river. This bridge was perfect until it was blown up by Liprandi, upon his retreat to the north side of the Tchernaya. We obtained a bird's-eye view of its ruined shafts, and the rubbish col-

lected by order of Diophantes still encumbers the valley.

Further up, the gorge presents a savage appearance. Dark and dangerous hollows mark the quarries from whence the Khersonians drew the stone with which they covered the peninsula. Later on, these quarries were worked by the Romans, and were the scene of the labours of St. Clement. In their recesses a rock-cut chapel has been excavated to his memory. Like the crypt of St. Clement's, in Rome, it is frescoed with scenes from his history. We were most desirous of comparing these pictures, but the guide declared it to be impossible, the gallery which led to the church having fallen in. He was, however, intent upon taking my companion down a still-existing path, in order to see some very ancient crypts. I remained behind, upon the Cape of the Winds, awaiting her return with some anxiety, and was most thankful when the brim of her hat re-appeared over the brow of the precipice. She had seen tier above tier of excavations. The chambers averaged from eighteen to twenty feet square, resembling those below, and the guide had directed her attention to one in which the hollow place in the centre was still perfect.

We rambled about for above an hour, and

then wound down through the flowery cleft, where our guide insisted upon picking a nosegay of his best pinks and mignonette, begging my companion to accept it as a souvenir of Inkermann. Our parting was quite cordial, and he pointed out a path which led through meadows, shady with the wide-spreading walnut-trees. The valley here was very fertile, and we felt as if we were taking a walk in one of our own midland counties. The road itself, however, was exceedingly solitary, the only people we met being a band of wild-looking men, who were crossing the meadows towards the village. We took them for Tartars, as they wore the fez, baggy breeches, and scarlet sashes. The "One-eyed" was on the look-out for us; we were not sorry to be under his protection, and after our long walk it was pleasant to sink back into our scarlet cushions, glide on through the murmuring rushes, and out into the clear sea-water.

We now kept more in the middle of the gulf than we had done in the morning, and were near enough to see the little village of Altir —the White Rock, in Tartar tongue—which stretches up a pretty ravine opening from the northern shore. In the palmy days of Sebastopol it was a place of some importance; the

commandant had a Summer residence there, and the population, for so small a place, was considerable, containing, as it did, the store and bakehouses which supplied the fleet, as well as a large hospital. There were formerly other villages upon this steppe, but they disappeared during the war.

The afternoon was lovely, and as we approached the Karabel Faubourg, it appeared as if the whole of its inhabitants had turned out to bathe, and that with a simplicity which astonished us; but the clear cool water upon this shore is particularly tempting. Disembarking at the Catherine steps, we managed to settle with the "One-eyed" to our mutual satisfaction, and on reaching home it was by no means unpleasant to find dinner ready. We spent the evening upon the rocks. The sun sank into the sea a ball of fire, and the afterglow flooded the white forts with rose-colour. White as Forts Constantine and Alexander appear to be, they are not cased with the creamy stone which is usually employed in Sebastopol, but, according to Mr. Vetzel's account, with a peculiar sort of limestone, called the stone of the steppes, which is as hard as marble. As we sat beside our favourite fountain, the string of doomed vessels which,

stretching from reef to reef, had guarded the narrow entrance to the roadstead, seemed to rise again to our view. What a sorrowful sight it must have been to see them placed in position, only to be destroyed! They were scuttled in the night, and at dawn the masts alone of the *Sizopol*, the *Varna*, and the *Silistria* were to be seen above the water. Men were awake again when the *Ourzil* and the *Selaftroil* went down; at eight o'clock the *Flora* sank, and numbers of people were assembled to see the last of their favourite ship, the *Three Holy Fathers*. The water rushed into her hull, but still the gallant vessel floated, and at last the *Thunderer* had to fire into her side to "shorten her agony." But it was not until the middle of the day that she reeled over; a mass of foam surrounded her, and she sank into the waves. When she disappeared, a groan arose, which burst from the very hearts of the bystanders. To the seamen who had manned them what a harrowing sight!—for, although recruited amongst landsmen, and barracked like soldiers, the Russian sailors loved their ships.

Before the Crimean War there were no marines in the Russian service, and the sailors, disciplined like soldiers, wore the same long grey coat, along with helmets. A story is told to

the effect that when the Grand-Duke Constantine inspected the Black Sea Fleet, its admiral was obliged to ask permission for the sailors to take off their proper uniform, as it was found impossible for them to mount the rigging or man the yards in it. It must not, however, be forgotten that at one period our own great commanders were so military that one celebrated hero never could be taught to say, "Put the ship about." "Wheel about!" he always roared through his trumpet.

Although on their last legs, the sunken vessels were not old, but, like all Russian ships of that period, they were built of miserable timber, which, to make matters worse, was used whilst green. It is said that the celebrated ship, the *Twelve Apostles*, was rotten when she was launched. The small quantity of really good oak, which is grown near Kazan, is sent to the Baltic; that of the Crimea, although good in quality, is small in bulk, and difficult to procure. Then no vessel belonging to the Black Sea Fleet lasts more than ten years, on account of the ravages made by a mischievous worm which infests the streams of the Chersonese, and is particularly prolific in the harbours of Sebastopol and Balaclava. It was to remedy this evil that the new docks were built at the former

place, and the waters of the Tchernaya conducted into them by means of the aqueduct. Vast sums of money were expended upon these works, and no sooner were they finished than it was discovered that the worm was generated in the Tchernaya and other fresh-water streams.

The muddy bottom of the harbour became the bed of at least a hundred vessels, representing, it is said, in value, fourteen millions sterling. These vessels were well prepared for being sunk, having been previously coated outside with tar and tallow. When it was proposed that they should be raised, by the skill of Mr. Gowan, he first enveloped himself as a diver, in order to examine them. Some were recovered whole, others in pieces. An enormous pump, capable of raising a thousand tons a minute, was employed to empty the interior of the larger ships. This powerful machine emptied the hulk of a submerged vessel in a very short space of time, and the lightening was so sudden that the sunken vessel rose to the surface before the water had time to re-enter by the various openings. An immense chain, a thousand feet in length, and each link in which weighed more than three hundred pounds, served as an aid to this pump, and numbers of divers were em-

ployed to seek for the pieces of those vessels which could not be raised entire. A very interesting account of the way in which these works were conducted is given in an amusing little book, translated from the French, called "The Deep Sea Bottom."

Mr. Gowan had, from his earliest youth, a great turn for mechanics. When he was five years old he began to make experiments upon a stream which ran through his father's garden in America, and some of his operations there were curiously skilful for one so young.

There are numbers of scorpions in Sebastopol, and having already found two in our chamber, we were obliged, before going to bed, to make a scrupulous search. Their bite is exceedingly venomous, producing irritation and fever. Those we caught were about the size of a shilling, with numerous legs, which they crumpled up when frightened. They were ugly creatures, and semi-transparent.

We led so pleasant a life that the days fled all too rapidly, bathing in the fresh early morning, and marketing afterwards. The luxuriant beauty of the heaped-up fruit exposed for sale was charming to the eye. Afterwards we walked about, or explored some of the ruins, and then home to breakfast

under the trees. In the middle of the day the sun was very hot, and, rising so early, we were quite ready for our siesta. If possible we bathed again before dinner, and spent the evening either upon the rocks, beside the fountain, or under the peristyle, listening to the evening hymn of the soldiers. Occasionally we strolled into the garden belonging to the naval library. When the shades of evening were gathering, the view from thence, the varied colours on sea and steppe, and the cool breezes, were delightful.

But there was one drawback to this charming spot—we were always in danger of being taken possession of by the Russian ladies, who were most uninteresting people. On the rocks we were safe from their civilities—they never came down to the shore, the spray would have taken the starch out of their ample muslins. We found the dogs which lived in the great square a source of much amusement. Their strongly-developed social qualities would have delighted the heart of a Darwinite. Our attention was drawn towards them one morning by seeing half a dozen of them, all curs, assemble in a knot. After a little yapping talk they set off to take a walk, and so did we. Our way lay in the same direction, and we, lingering behind, on they marched in a compact body, keeping

steadily in the middle of the road, and evidently enjoying their promenade. In about a mile and a half they stopped, held a consultation, agreed that they had had exercise enough, turned round, and trotted home in the same orderly manner. Reaching the square, they separated, each returning to his own door-step, where he lay and blinked the sunny hours away.

Frequently did they make these excursions; and occasionally they indulged in the pleasures of the chase. There happened to be an unfortunate pig which roamed about amongst the dust-heaps, and sometimes our cur-friends chevied him for half an hour together, never attempting to do him any damage, but chasing him with prodigious excitement and noise. One day a very nimble fellow had a particular part allotted to him—he had to head piggy when he got out of bounds, and turn him back upon his persecutors. They were certainly wonderful dogs; and who knows, perhaps one of these days their descendants will drop their fur, walk on their hind legs, and chase the fox instead of the pig.

It is reckoned that there are as many as one hundred and twenty-six British cemeteries in the Crimea, and as we were desirous of seeing

some of them, we consulted Mr. Vetzel upon the subject, and he informed us that one of the largest lay some little distance from the field of Inkermann. So procuring a carriage with a whity-brown driver, the very ditto of the one who had taken us to Kherson, we set off up Catherine Street, and skirted the Man-of-war Harbour, on the other side of which the endless ruins of arsenals, stone houses, barracks, and hospitals stood up in forlorn confusion. At the head of the bay a profusion of cannon-balls lay scattered about—the remains of former stores; whilst at some distance, in front of a small portion of the arsenal still left entire, rusty pyramids, symmetrically placed, were dotted about.

Giving the hill of the Malakoff a wide berth, we crossed the tail of the valley which separates it from the Redan, and commenced the ascent of an excellent road, cut out of the hill. The rocky sides entirely concealed the open country, and we emerged at last upon the undulating steppe, whose bosom was scarred by long lines of trenches and earth-works. Here we got out of our little carriage, much puzzled to tell what it could be that shimmered in such bright patches over hill and plain. They looked like pools of water, but that we knew to be impos-

sible; and on nearer inspection we found that they consisted of heaps of broken bottles, thrown aside from the various camps, and scattered over the plateau, of battered tin vessels, kettles, pans, and cases which had contained preserved meats and vegetables. To the wild and scanty shepherds who range these solitary steppes such rubbish is of no use. Near a great town it would probably have long ere this been removed by some of those mysterious people who turn everything to account. The simple Crim-Tartars, who left the dead unrifled upon the battle-fields, wanted none of it; and have left the *débris* thrown aside by the troops equally undisturbed.

It was easy to see where tents had been placed and men had bivouacked, by the heaped-up refuse which surrounded some smooth spot, where the sand was as fresh and pure as if untrodden by human foot. Map in hand, we wandered from spot to spot amongst the remains of British trenches and batteries, making out the different earth-works, possibly not with perfect accuracy, but to our own entire satisfaction.

Returning to our vehicle, we drove about a mile further into the interior of the high table-land, and drew up near the cemetery. It was

very large, and a six-foot wall carefully protected an area of some two acres which sloped gently to the south. There had once been a doorway, probably for the convenience of the workmen; but it was now walled-up, and the usual flights of steps led up on one side and down upon the other. There were a vast number of monuments, much varied in form, obelisks and crosses, pyramids and flat stones, marble raised in the form of Greek altars, and head-stones sculptured with various emblems. As may be imagined, some of the inscriptions were very sad. Many a young head lay there. Some monuments were raised by the men to the memory of their officers, others by the regiment itself to some member who had fought and died like a hero. Others again had been placed there by private friends or brother soldiers, or dedicated to medical officers who had succumbed under toil and infection, whilst labouring to save the lives of the troops.

A very large monument in the centre of the cemetery was erected to the memory of the officers and men of the Royal Artillery—long was the list of names it bore; and there was another to those of the 18th Regiment. On a group of three we read the names of Captain Bowles and Captain Rooke; all that was

legible upon the third was the name of Clutterbuck. Three other headstones, near together, bore the names of Wynne, Smyth, and Davis. The greater number of these tombs were in good repair. Under a few the earth had sunk, which had caused a part to crack or fall in, and most of the stone employed appeared to be of a fragile and scaly nature; but in all this great cemetery we saw no signs of wanton mischief —no damage that a few hours' work would not repair, though time and weather had rendered illegible some of the names and inscriptions. Our thoughts would turn to the tears that had been shed, far away over that bright strip of blue which we saw in the distance, to the memory of the dead who slept so quietly upon this wild steppe. We felt it almost a duty to visit these graveyards; a melancholy one, but still there was a satisfaction in being able to assure far-away friends, whose dead were treasured in them, that the Crimean cemeteries are generally orderly and in good repair.

The steppe we were upon declined gently to the brow of the cliffs overhanging the Tchernaya. In the distance, away towards the Cathcart Heights, long formal rows of peculiar form told of those who had been hastily interred upon the field of Inkermann, but these were the only

British graves which we saw entirely unenclosed. We supposed that they were English, from their position, but it is possible that they might have been Russians, who were interred just where they happened to fall. The French had removed the bones of their dead to one vast cemetery.

Towards the north we had a very extensive view. The Redan sloped up on one side, the Malakoff upon the other, and, through the depression which separated them, a portion of white Sebastopol was visible. The Man-of-war Harbour came next. The eye looked over to the dark blue roadstead, then rested upon the arid Severnaya, Fort Constantine glittering in the sun, and, far away beyond, a curving shore, with the mouths of the Belbek, the Katcha, the Alma, and the Bulganak, terminating in the great point of Koslo, or Eupatoria.

We had no choice but to return by the same road which we had mounted in coming, the deep ravines allowing the traveller no choice of route. We found the way encumbered by some large waggons and teams of horses, the drivers of which were resting in the shade; and curious, wild-looking men they were, in strange costumes. Although there are few Nogai Tartars remaining in the Crimea,

we thought that they might possibly belong to that race. Their legs were swathed with narrow strips of leather, whilst their feet were naked, and they wore a garment which had some resemblance to a kilt. Their religion was clearly indicated by the closely-shaven head, which only retained the one long lock by which their prophet was to draw them up to Paradise.

CHAPTER XI.

Shells and Sea-weeds—Visit to Balaclava—Remains of the Dwellings of Early Greek Settlers—Gardens of St. George's Monastery—French Cemetery—English Head-quarters—Remains of Watch-towers—English and French Cemeteries—Tartar Youths—Charge of the Light Brigade—Grave of a Sister of Mercy—Lord Raglan's Reverie Disturbed—The Inhabitants of Balaclava—A Copious Haul of Mackerel.

THE arrival of the Kertch steamer was quite an event in quiet, ruined Sebastopol. On such an occasion half a dozen porters and a few sailors would collect, and a couple of vehicles with nimble steeds make their appearance; we had lost sight of droskies, together with the full blue frocks which prevail in Great Russia. On this occasion the boat came in at breakfast-time, and in the afternoon we strolled down to see it depart. Many of the passengers had

visited the town, and were hurrying back to their floating home. Amongst the crowd we perceived three people, who were carrying along a frightful amount of bundles, and who proved to be our old fellow-travellers, Monsieur, Madame, and *ma nièce*. They got on deck, descended into the cabin, and that was the last we saw of them. Oddly enough, we had never once met during our walks or excursions, our hours probably being different, for in the country Russians are in the habit of dining early.

From the quay we wandered to the shore, to collect shells. They lay between the rocks in millions, and, although most perfect, were of the tiniest description. There were bivalves, and spirals, and cowries, but no bigger than grains of canary seed, and their extreme delicacy and beauty of form could only be appreciated when seen through a magnifying-glass. It was rare indeed to find a shell the size of a pea. The sea-weeds on this coast are very fine, and most brilliant in colour. Whilst we were bathing the most lovely tufts would come floating along, every fibre visible in the clear water; and as they undulated up and down, they really appeared to enjoy the gentle motion of the waves. The evening brought with it every promise of a

storm. The air was hot and heavy, and great masses of cloud gathered along the horizon, through the rents in which pierced bright streaks of wrathful red. The sea-line undulated, and the water lay in patches of purple and black. The effect was very fine. Every moment we expected to hear the roar of distant thunder. Our fountain was agitated, and betrayed unusual vigour. Boom! boom! came the waves under the rocks, and then the basin was full to overflowing. A tall jet arose, and scattered in foam. We sat long, but the threatened tempest never came. The night passed quietly, and the early morning was as calm and the air as pure as ever.

Our next expedition was to Balaclava. We engaged a carriage for the day, proposing to follow the coast instead of taking the more direct road, which lay over the steppes and further inland. At Kherson we got out for a few minutes, in order to trace the foundations of Vladimir's Palace, which abutted upon the market-place, and to give a parting glance at Glycia's rubbish heap; after which we went our way, following a broad road, which was thoroughly out of order. It had probably been made for the convenience of the French baggage waggons, as their troops occupied the ground south

of the Quarantine Bay. When this road emerged upon the open steppe, we found the plain, as far as we could see, mapped out like a chess-board, with the roots of stone walls, which stood from one to two feet high. These were the remains of the dwellings of the earliest Greek settlers, and on examination we found that the shape of the rooms was clearly visible. They were very small, and the houses, closely packed together, opened into narrow lanes. One would think that these crowded dwellings must have been very unwholesome.

The surrounding country, once cheerful with orchards, vineyards, and gardens, was now completely desolate. Not a crop of any sort, unless the scanty herbage might be so called, enlivened the monotonous undulations, and we had not even a view of the sea until we were close to the promontory of Parthenium. On a ledge cut in the sheer-rock, the Tauric Diana once held her court. My companion perched herself upon the brink, but it requires a strong head and well-knit knees to enable the gazer to look on the narrow platform where the figure of the cruel goddess stood. It was a relief to turn towards the terraces, gardens, poplars, and fountains of St. George's Monastery. A slip from the brow of the hill above it would have been

fatal; but one would not have had so far to travel to one's doom as over the promontory of Parthenium. With the exception of the crypt excavations, all belonging to the present monastery is modern; but had the buildings dated from the time of Vladimir, it would have been all the same to us, for ladies may not enter its sacred cloisters. To appreciate thoroughly the curious situation of this establishment, it should be seen as we first caught sight of it from the sea.

Leaving the coast road here, we made a détour in order to visit the French cemetery, stopping, however, before we reached it, in order to pause for a moment before a large, comfortable farm-house, surrounded by a belt of trees, and enlivened by a garden which was gay with a profusion of common flowers. So home-like was the appearance of this abode that we could have fancied it standing in some quiet village in England; and yet its humble chambers had been the scene of deep consultations and anxious thoughts. Here were the English head-quarters, and in the room with the large sunny casement, which overlooked a great bed of sun-flowers, Lord Raglan had breathed his last.

Half a mile further on we left the carriage, in order to examine a building marked on the map

as an "ancient Greek tower." It was square, and formed of smooth, well-fitting stones, fastened together with thin cement. A remarkably small doorway was filled up with rubble. This tower is not of similar form to that under which General Cathcart lies. There are many such in the Chersonese, of various character, and they are supposed to have been watch-towers.

A long avenue of poplar-trees led to the handsome iron gates of the cemetery, which were shaded by yew and cypress-trees. A very high wall encloses the large area in which the French nation has collected together the bones of her dead. A concierge, emerging from a carefully-kept lodge, admitted us, and, on entering, our first thought was, "How grand! What a fine national monument! Why has not England done the same?" Mortuary chapels were placed at intervals, lining the square enclosure; not a weed cropped up upon the broad gravel walks, and flowers, in rich clusters, bloomed in the parterres, and scented the air. It was a beautiful pleasure-garden, a charming oasis reclaimed from the wild steppe. The chapel walls bore long lists of names, those of the dead who were supposed to rest beneath. The nation had also raised separate tombs to many of her officers, all handsome, and all

trim, and all bearing inscriptions recording the name of the occupant, and the glory of the French army. But we had not been in the place ten minutes before we felt how infinitely preferable were our more humble graveyards, with their low walls, sunken graves, and the half-effaced lines placed on marble or stone raised to the memory of a comrade, by privates to some loved officer, by far-away parents to a dead son, with a thousand inscriptions which had flowed from the depths of sorrowing hearts to the memory of those who would never return. Yet far preferable was all this, which was to be found in our simple burying-grounds, with their touching epitaphs and preponderance of humble graves, to the vast concentration of national vanity which here presented itself. Before we left the place we were quite weary of the "glory of France," the "honour of the *drapeau*."

Our morning's marketing had not been in vain. Forth from our basket we drew great bunches of grapes, yellow, tawny, and black, dull with the fresh rich bloom; but, according to Crimean prices, the fruit was costly, for we had insisted upon having the pick of a wide-spread, heaped-up stall, and consequently had to pay five sous a pound for the black, and six

for the Muscat. The latter were as large as moderate-sized gooseberries, and the flavour delicious. We presented our laddie with a splendid bunch, along with a piece of bread. He took them in an undemonstrative manner, but when he had eaten them he turned round, lifted his wide-awake high above his head, made a deep bow, and uttered some soft words, to which we responded by a nod and a smile. These gentle Crim lads have a very amiable air; they look up in one's face to read one's wishes, and do all they can to please. They are a slight and sickly-looking race, and, during the war, many who were pressed into the service of the Allies died of what, to them, was over-work. One English ploughboy would outweigh three of these lank-haired boys.

Seeing a large cemetery at a short distance from the road, we alighted, got over a fence, and crossed a rough piece of ground, on which it was easy to see that troops had bivouacked, and climbed into the graveyard. It appeared to be well kept, so we did not linger, being anxious to reach Balaclava. Somewhat further on another square of white told of a second cemetery, which we also stopped to visit. It was very small, and in the centre there had been a tomb of considerable size; but it had fallen to

pieces, the long inscription was obliterated, the ground around it in such a state that we came to the reluctant conclusion that this grave had been wantonly disturbed, and we left the place with pained feelings; but this was a solitary instance. The gently-sloping hills which formed the valley upon which we now entered bore evident marks of former occupation. We spread out our maps, which a brisk wind agitated in a most provoking manner, and found that the ground to the left had been the site of the British and French cavalry quarters, and the earthworks to the right those defended by the Turks. Soon afterwards a beautiful and most interesting expanse of country opened out before us. Concealing the horizon, the Fedioukine Hills lay in many a purple fold. Nearer at hand a low ridge stretched across the plain, the Causeway Heights, at the foot of which there was an extensive grassy flat, with nothing in its appearance to indicate that it was one of the most celebrated spots in Europe, the theatre of two of the most striking events in modern warfare—first in time, in courage, and in interest, the charge of Scarlett's three hundred, and, only second to it, the charge of the Light Cavalry. As we gazed down with eager eyes, we could scarcely believe that that quiet, soli-

tary tract of pasture-land was really the far famed plain of Balaclava; all looked so rural and so peaceful. The little white, vine-clad Tartar villages twinkled out of thickets of fruit-trees. One of them, which we believed to be the village of Kerlovka, was remarkably pretty.

At the mouth of the valley along which we had come, our driver stopped and pointed to what we perceived was a cemetery, although it was not enclosed as usual by walls. We reached it, and entered with some difficulty, for it was guarded by a low hedge and occasional palings. A good many flat gravestones were scattered about, and it appeared as if the interments had been made hastily, according to no regular plan. The inscriptions, too, were difficult to read. The place must have been unusually damp, for moss and lichen had crept into the furrowed letters, and vine-tendrils, still half covering stone and monument, showed that the spot had once been vineyard ground. The scene was somewhat disorderly, but it was the disorder of neglected nature, and therefore tolerable. In one corner stood a beautiful little Gothic cross of pure white marble. A rotten gate had sunk over it, which, with some difficulty, we removed, and found it, though weather-

stained, not broken. It was a woman's grave, and reverently we endeavoured to efface the blotches. If our creed had permitted of our uttering a prayer for the dead, we should have done so there. A Sister of Mercy slept below. The simple inscription was:—"Elizabeth Drake, Nurse," with the date of her decease.

On reaching Kadikoi we made our laddie understand that we were very thirsty, and he drew up at a rock-cut fountain, where the clear stream, overflowing the stony brim, ran sparkling along the pebbly bed which it had worn for itself. In the whole Chersonese there are only two fresh-water springs. It was evidently a well-known halting place, for two little children toddled out of a cottage with a couple of tin mugs, which they dipped into the stream and brought to the side of the carriage. The clear cool liquid was most grateful, for our lips were almost glued together with the luscious juice of the sugary grapes we had been eating. We drank to the health of the nymph Artaria. According to modern light thrown upon ancient story, it was here that the ambassadors sent by Ulysses met with the daughter of King Antiphates. This, too, was the stream that supplied the town of Kherson, the turning aside of which caused the fall of the place; and from its bab-

bling source St. Clement himself had probably quenched his thirst. Half a mile from Balaclava we left our vehicle, and caught sight, for the first time, of the deep blue pool, to all appearance a solitary tarn, enclosed by rugged mountains. There it lay, as tranquil as if it had never heard of strife and tumult, but was there only to bear the long shadow of the tall Genoese tower upon its bosom, and mirror the beauty of the sky by day, and that of the stars by night. We had paused upon a memorable spot. It was there that Lord Raglan, in advance of his staff and all alone, stood to consider what he conceived to be a fresh-water pool. His reverie was of short duration. A shot plumped down into the water, and fell so near as to splash him. Another and another caused him to move away. Colonel Monto, the officer in charge of the castle, seeing soldiers in the distance, imagined that, until either attacked or summoned, it was his place to offer resistance—a bit of etiquette which might have cost his country dear. The staff galloped up, but the startling events of the day were not yet over. A louder, deeper roar, and from a different point, caused the air to vibrate, and although no glimpse of sea had as yet been visible, men exclaimed, "That is Lyons."

We passed, as Lord Raglan had done, along the one straggling grey street of the town, which was built of wood, and very Eastern in appearance. Niches behind opened upon the benches where the poor wares were displayed, a little fruit, dried fish, and rings of bread being the chief commodities exposed for sale. We regarded the people with interest. Those young men lounging about had been boys, those old men in their prime, when they figured in a scene which must have been very touching. Seeing Lord Raglan's brilliant staff ride up, they trembled, for they had heard the mortar roar from the Castle, and had seen the shells come hissing through the air. They knew that the fault was not theirs, still ancient tradition had impressed upon them the belief that those who received the conqueror with a shot would be put to the sword. So, when the warlike cavalcade approached, they took bread and salt, held out the loaves, and fell on their knees to propitiate the chief.

We found the inhabitants of Balaclava busily employed with boat and net. In the middle of the sapphire pool there was a streak of brightest silver; a small shoal of mackerel, in search of quiet quarters, had floated to their doom. We watched whilst the fishermen pulled in a haul,

and as the unfortunate fish lay struggling and gasping upon the shore, we came to the conclusion that they were the largest and most brilliantly striped mackerel we had ever seen. But those of Balaclava are, in fact, celebrated for their colour and excellent flavour, and it is the custom to pickle them in brine for five months before they are eaten. The red mullet is also found there in great perfection.

On we walked by the side of the water, trying to imagine what Lord Raglan's feelings must have been when another mighty roar echoed from hill to hill, and a gallant vessel, with her proud flag floating on high, came curving into the bay, having, to all appearance, emerged from the very bosom of the mountains. It was the long-expected union of England's military and naval force.

CHAPTER XII.

Settlement of Balaclava—Successive Conquerors of the Crimea—The Castle of Balaclava—Painful Reminiscences—Ludicrous Incident—Bay of Balaclava—Wonderful Scene—Scene of the Light Cavalry Charge—Cape of the Winds—Excursion to the Malakoff—Russian Patriotism—Exterior of the Fortress—Expressive Pantomime—Rifle-pits—Cathedral of Vladimir—Costly Aqueduct—Destructive Insect—Excavations—Return Voyage.

THE little settlement of Balaclava was born in a very remote age. According to some writers, its shores were first peopled by colonies of Indian priests, who bore their Buddhist idols over the stormy Euxine. The Greeks called it the Port of Symbols; its after-fate was that of Kherson; the same conquerors swept over both. In 1475 the Turks drove the Genoese out of their strong castle, and gave Balaclava up to the Tartars, who resided there in peace and prosperity until that ruthless woman, Catherine

II., fearing the strength of the Tartar population, expelled with violence those who refused to emigrate, and, calling Greek soldiers to her aid, settled their families along the western shores of the Crimea.

We followed a path which led to the castle, and found it so steep that we were glad to rest half-way in the shade of a primitive little wooden church, to which a small burial-ground was attached. The inscriptions upon some of the head-stones recalled painful memories of the deaths from cholera of several young officers. Poor fellows! they had quitted their country, hoping at least to die a soldier's death, and here they were laid low by pestilence! It would have pleased their friends to have seen the quiet beauty of the sheltered spot in which they were laid.

The Castle of Balaclava closely resembles that of Inkermann, and if it cannot claim foundations built by Mithridates, it may boast, according to some, of standing upon the site of that "domed palace," the abode of the giant King of the Lestrigones. The tall tower, which most people know so well from prints and photographs, was one of a series which stretched across the Chersonese, and kept up by signals a communication with the important

fortress of Mangoup. It still keeps lonely watch over rock and sea, hill and dale; but it is no longer decorated by the grand coats-of-arms with which the Genoese, in rich profusion, ornamented the castle, for they disappeared under Russian rule. Now the naked ruins are bare enough. It was curious to look down upon the simple church, the grey village, and the quiet pool, which lay like some sparkling jewel in a rocky cup. How the lake-like appearance of the shimmering water must have reminded the Highlanders of many a mountain tarn in distant Scotland! The once busy quay was now solitary, and as we sat we thought of the day when the soldiers, although death was busy in their ranks, laughed as they looked towards the harbour, and saw one of their own "guid wives," with brandished broom, stoutly belabouring the unhappy Turks, who, flying in a panic, vainly hoped to regain their vessels.

The Bay of Balaclava, which runs inland for a mile, measures twelve hundred feet across at the widest part, and is ninety fathoms at its greatest depth. The craggy rocks which form the neck overlap one another, leaving between them a channel of eight hundred feet in width, and one hundred fathoms in depth. The view from the headland struck us with astonishment.

What a scene of confusion! What had Dame Nature been about? It appeared as if she had collected an endless variety of marbles, blue, red, and grey, of stones, and mud, and sand, thrown them into her cauldron, mixed the ingredients together, rolled the seething substance in her mighty hands, and tossed the balls on high to harden, and be the astonishment of man. "Ha! ha!" she cried, "the coming race will quarry the strength from my sides, draw the metal from my veins, steal the precious jewels which I have hidden away in my innermost recesses, penetrate into my secrets, and work with my means—fire and water—but it will be many a long day before they make puddings like these!" For, like huge plum-puddings, grey with over-boiling, do these huge lumps of conglomerate look, as they lie heaped upon one another, the astonishment of geologists. Perhaps the great morsels of rifted rock which fringed the shore might have been hurled there by the enraged and hungry giants as they saw their enemies about to retreat.

Slowly retracing our steps, lingering for a moment by the lonely graves and the little church, we then got into the carriage, bade adieu to the grey village and deep blue pool of

Balaclava, and proceeded along a good road, leading north, which soon, however, came to an untimely end. Thereupon we alighted, and walked along the elastic, turfy plain, and, coming to some mounds of earth, we sat down upon the highest of them, and once more drew out our maps. The mounds proved to be the remains of the Turkish redoubts; and, if our maps told true, the scene of the Light Cavalry charge was immediately in front of us. Not a sound stirred the air, not a living thing was in sight; the slight haze of the late Summer's day had passed from off the Fedioukine Hills, the shadows were deepening, and each moment their swelling outlines became more clearly defined against the tender sky. When all nature breathed of peace, it was difficult indeed to conjure up visions of war, of tumult, and of death. But we shut our eyes, bade the vision come, and pictured that famous escapade in all its details.

Passing on once more over the pleasant aromatic herbage, we strayed in amongst the neglected vine-stumps which had proved so troublesome to some of those heroic six hundred; and did we not feel proud of our countrymen when we saw the spot on which the gallant band had cut their way through the grey-

coated phalanx, that wall of felt, which turned the sharp edge of the stout English weapons. Here we left the green sward, getting into the Woronzoff Road, which runs along the Causeway Heights, and here forms a junction with the Sapoune ridge. The slopes of the latter were dotted with small cemeteries, enclosed by walls, outside of which lay long mounds. "Ruski," said our boy, as he pointed to them with his whip. From the high table-land upon which we were standing almost the whole of the Chersonese was mapped out before us, and a wild view it was. The eye ranged over folded hills and long ridges, deep ravines, which looked like stains in the landscape, forest, and steppe; whilst here and there arose a lonely watch-tower, under one of which, not far from the heights which bear his name, General Cathcart lies interred. Far away the majestic "Cape of the Winds," with its sheer precipice, stands forth, always a prominent object. The Tchernaya was hidden from us by the cliffs which cradled it; but the grey stones of the Genoese castle, stern and bare, surmounted the excavated rock of white clay, in which the doors of the crypt chambers appeared like long lines of dots. The spectral-looking lighthouses upon the heights of Inkermann told of stormy and dangerous seas,

whilst the ocean line, the mighty roadstead, and the Man-of-war Harbour streaked the undulating plain below with brightest blue.

Our good-natured laddie was determined that we should lose the sight of nothing which it was in his power to show us; and, stopping a passing carriage that contained three gentlemen in black, very like Roman Catholic priests, a short conversation and a good deal of pointing ensued; after which, leaving the road, we once more bounded over the turf, and drew up, divided only by a slip of scrub from a cemetery of considerable size. We got out, and spent half an hour within the enclosure. Many of the inscriptions were worn by the weather, and some of the stones sloped; but the general appearance of the place was orderly. When we regained the road, we found that we were upon ground which we had previously visited. Descending the deep ravine, we came out by the head of the Man-of-war Harbour, and so terminated our expedition to Balaclava.

Our next excursion was to the Malakoff. We might have reached it by rounding the head of the Man-of-war Harbour, and ascending its southern side; but the walk would have been long and fatiguing, so we crossed the square, and hailed the "One-eyed," who, rousing him-

self from a sleepy reverie, hastened with alacrity to prepare his boat. We had a pleasant half hour's row round to the northern side of the hill, where we landed at a wooden pier, so overgrown by tangled seaweed that it was with difficulty we reached the shore without a wetting. The ascent upon this side is gradual, but long, and having no idea what direction to take, it was a comfort to find that the "One-eyed," having secured his boat to a stump, was prepared to act as our guide. He swung on ahead, and crossing a considerable area enclosed by walls, once a large parade ground, we mounted the hill, which exhibited undoubted signs of former military occupation. Our thoughts returned to the day on which we had heard the guns of the Invalides of Mont Valérien, and of many another fort round Paris, announce the news, making the very earth tremble, that the Malakoff was taken. We remembered also feeling an unpleasant twinge that the victory had been achieved by the French.

The first story of the fort, built of the hard stone of the steppes—thanks to its sheltering glacis—is quite perfect. The moat around the tower is narrow, but free from any sort of *débris*. The glacis itself was formed, the tower altered and strengthened, and the lines of de-

fence executed in a marvellously short space of time. Every vehicle in Sebastopol was pressed into the service. Soldiers and sailors, citizens, the men loosed from the prisons, the women and children—all fired by the holy zeal of Korniloff and the genius of Todleben, laboured with unceasing energy. Up the sides of the steep hill, and down into the deep valley, did six thousand human beings toil in relays, but without intermission, until the works were finished, the ground at night being lighted by torches.

When Korniloff reached the Malakoff, upon the memorable seventeenth of October, he found its guns silenced and deserted. We stood in the room which it was his last act to inspect, with the idea of turning it into a hospital. It was a large, circular crypt chamber, and perfectly dark when the door was closed. Even the roar of the batteries must have been deadened by its walls, which are fifteen feet thick. As we left the spot the "One-eyed," hearing the name Korniloff, beckoned us along, and, stopping at a little distance, made us understand that it was there the Russian hero had fallen.

We then returned to inspect the outside of the fortress, and our guide pointed out the unexploded mine, which Mr. Vetzel had begged us to observe. By the signs he made, we

were able also to trace some of the French siege-works. A very few yards from the tower there is a small cemetery, prettily arranged with shrubs, in the midst of which stood a large and handsome monument of pure white marble, bearing an inscription in the Russian character. As we could make nothing of it, we beckoned up our guide, and pointed to the name. He read it off, but it was difficult to pronounce and impossible to spell.

The descent which separates the Malakoff from the Redan was fatiguing, on account of the loose earth, holes, and stones. We, however, toiled manfully along, and at last gained the top of the hill, the seamed sides of which bore witness to the desperate struggle which had there taken place. There were mounds and ditches, and holes rent by violence. How, it was easy to see, for the earth and stone were still splintered around, and great thick bits of iron, some too heavy to lift, told where the shells had burst. It was a scene of indescribable confusion. What a dreadful day must that have been, when so many precious lives were lost upon this hill! Its very foundations must have trembled with the roaring of the heavy guns and the whistle of the shells which came hurtling through the smoke-stained air!

As we stumbled along, our conductor stopped at several spots, and was clever enough at pantomime to make us understand his stories. In one place it was clear that he wished to tell us he had seen a man cut into three pieces; in another that a desperate struggle had taken place, in which all those engaged had fallen. And how quiet it was now, as we stopped to unearth roots and bulbs sheltered in the furrows ploughed by cannon-balls which had done their work, and lay in the soil half buried and rusty. We picked up several round shot, and one or two bullets, as memorials. We might have collected a basketful had we chosen. The two hours' strife upon that September day cost England dear. Three hundred and eighty-five officers and men were left dead upon the field, a greater number wounded, and a large proportion reported as missing. One of the most melancholy spots in the Crimea is that where stands the large memorial erected to the British officers who fell in the assault.

Reaching the foot of the Redan, we were at a loss to imagine what the numerous rows of small hollows, which we there found, could be. One line was separated from another by a bank some yards in height, and the plain that intersected looked as if it had been mapped out for

giants to play at some great game. These were the rifle pits so often spoken of, and it struck us as curious that, after such a lapse of time, they should remain there undisturbed by weather or by man. Indeed, nothing in the Crimea astonished us more than the untouched condition of building and battle-field, the ground often really bearing the appearance of having been occupied by troops but a few months previously. How different from other countries, where the crop and the vine grow green above the dead, the following, or, at least, the second season after the death-struggle.

In the evening we walked as far as the cathedral, which is in course of construction. It is dedicated to St. Vladimir, and is a handsome and spacious building, showing to advantage the beautiful colour and quality of the Inkermann stone. In it four Admirals are buried—Lazaref, Korniloff, Istomin, and Nakhimoff. Lazaref, be it remarked, though a Russian, was brought up in the British navy, and fought as a midshipman at Trafalgar.

Day by day the time fled, and all too rapidly. We felt as if we had struck root at Sebastopol, and not even the enticement of new scenes could reconcile us to the prospect of our departure. Although we had made ourselves

thoroughly acquainted with the neighbourhood, and had revisited many of the spots which had first taken our fancy, it had been our intention to reach Eupatoria by land, passing Baktchéserai, which is still richly worth visiting, notwithstanding that many of its relics, which dated from the time of the Khans, having disappeared. Mr. Vetzel, however, assured us that such a journey would be a matter of much difficulty, and that, having luggage, our only way of proceeding would be to hire a cart with straw at the bottom. He also appeared to think that such a lonely route required the protection of a gentleman, even though the country was quiet, adding that we should probably find neither provisions nor tolerable shelter, and might have to sleep in the straw at the bottom of our vehicle. This being the case, we gave up the plan, adhering to our rule, when travelling alone, of running no risks, and taking the advice of those better informed than ourselves. Nothing, certainly, could be rougher or more uncomfortable than the appearance of some of the carts which we had seen prepared for Russians about to cross the country in that fashion. It was therefore arranged that we should await the arrival of the boat for Odessa.

One last expedition, however, we were determined to make, not having as yet visited the rock cuttings which we had observed upon our first voyage to Inkermann. As usual, we secured for this purpose the services of the "One-eyed," who by this time had come to consider us as his own property. The water was not as smooth as usual; there was a slight breeze, and when we got past the sheltering point of the Karabel Faubourg, tiny waves began to battle with the boat. We therefore made our friend understand that we desired to be landed at the first convenient spot after passing Careening Bay, as we wished to see the ruins of the aqueduct. This aqueduct, which was constructed by an English engineer, is computed to have cost £100,000. In consequence of the nature of the ground, the labour was great; rocks had to be pierced, basins cut, and tunnels bored. It was twenty-one years in progress, the object being to convey fresh water into the docks, and thereby avoid or destroy the worm which had proved so destructive to the ships. But, alas! it was labour thrown away; it was found, too late, that the mischievous insect bred in the Tchernaya, and that after the introduction of its waters into the harbour the evil was as great as ever. Five

years had been the period originally fixed for the completion of the work, and with English labourers it might have been accomplished in the given time; but the serfs employed were very slow, and were, besides, under the disadvantage of not being provided with proper tools. No such convenience even as a wheelbarrow existed in the whole of the Russias! The earth and stones were taken up by the hand, and transferred by each man to a bag he bore on his back. The arches of the aqueduct are divided into three parts, which together measure a thousand feet. The piece which stretched across the little valley where we landed was terribly broken, and the stone coping of an extensive basin adjoining was utterly smashed.

The scenery was very pretty, for the gorge was well-wooded, especially upon the left side. My companion set off, through oak and ash and beech, to climb to the battle-field. I caught sight of her from time to time, watching until she finally vanished over the brow of the hill. The turf where I was seated was very soft and even, but it was ploughed by many a cannon-ball. They lay where they had fallen, and appeared to be of very large calibre. As for moving one of them, I might as well have

attempted to move a monument. It was very solitary, the only sound being the distant falling of the woodman's axe, and the air was so still that I could hear the crashing of the young timber. The ruined arches of fine white stone framed long strips of bright blue sea, and I might have passed the time pleasantly enough had I not grown uneasy at the prolonged absence of my companion. Eagerly I scrutinized the wood through which she had mounted, but she suddenly appeared from another direction, having traversed a great part of the plateau, in order to reach the long line of graves which we had noticed upon a previous occasion. But after making herself crimson with over-exertion, she had found no indication as to the nationality of those who slept beneath the soil. We afterwards consulted Mr. Vetzel upon the subject, and he said that these mounds marked the trenches where numbers of British privates were hastily interred after the Battle of Inkermann.

Regaining our boat, another half-hour brought us to the spot where we had seen the excavations. Alas! we could only look up at them, and long for a ladder; the apertures cut in the limestone were at least twenty feet above our heads. We could, perceive, however, that there

was a covered gallery lighted by narrow slits, and that it gave ingress to chambers which were connected, and we were almost sure that the three stories could be reached from one another. It appeared to be by no means an uncomfortable place to dwell in, but was on much too luxurious a scale to have been inhabited by the Tauri; nor would that people have chosen a northern aspect such as this. The doors and apertures were larger than in the Inkermann crypts, and ornamented with exterior decorations in Grecian style. One doorway reminded us of engravings of Eastern rock-cut tombs, having a pediment and pillars in relief. What a variety of conjectures we formed as to the habits and appearance of the people who had dwelt in this rock! The absence of any exterior mode of entrance, excepting by ladders, which could be withdrawn at will, seemed to indicate that it had been used at a period of insecurity.

Close to this spot was one of the tunnels through which the waters of the aqueduct had flowed. It was a beautiful piece of workmanship. The trough was lined with fine white cement, and on each side there was a smooth and elevated path, a safe thoroughfare being necessary, as the rock itself jutted out into the water.

Our return voyage was far from pleasant. The wind was against us, and in order to avoid certain currents, we launched forth into the middle of the roadstead. Buffetted by short, crisp waves, we got along very slowly. My companion was brave enough, but I did not like the state of affairs; and when great spurts of water sprinkled us with foam, I uttered exclamations, which caused the "One-eyed" to chuckle. As I regarded him through the spray, I thought he looked uncomfortably like "the Ancient Mariner," and was greatly relieved in mind when, at the end of an hour and a half, I planted my foot once more firmly upon the Catherine Stairs.

CHAPTER XIII.

Expenses at Sebastopol—Coquetry of the Ladies of Southern Russia—Eupatoria—Karaim Jews—A Disagreeable Fellow-passenger — Schamyl's Son — Odessa—Hôtel de l'Europe—Annoying Discovery—Hôtel de Londres — Inconveniences of Odessa — Search for a Photographer—The Duke's Garden—Statue of the Duke de Rechlieu—The Black Sea—Last View of Russia—Character of the Russian People.

OUR last day at Sebastopol arrived; we went early to the baths, and laid in a store of grapes at the market. Whilst at our *déjeuner*, the enemy who was to bear us away arrived. But the boat was not to sail until three o'clock, so we had still a little time before us. The packing was got through, and the heart of the ancient serving-woman was made happy by a gift in money and the reversion of some old dresses, which, having belonged to my com-

panion, must have been somewhat juvenile for her. "Last scene of all," we paid what remained to be paid of our bill. Of all the places we had been in, we found Sebastopol the most reasonable. Fruit, baths, everything included, with the exception of carriages and boats, our expenses for the two only averaged eighteen francs a day; whereas generally elsewhere, for the same accommodation, we had paid from five to eight-and-twenty.

Duty done, we went down the Catherine Steps once more in search of the "One-eyed" —not, alas! to order a boat, but to give him a parting donation, for we had found him very useful and obliging. The interview ended in a perfect shower of winks and nods and wreathed smiles; and then we strolled off to our rocky fountain, and, had the sea-nymph who guarded it been visible, we should gladly have also made her an offering. But she came not, though we called, so we stretched ourselves upon the sand in the shadow of a great morsel of conglomerate rent from the Nicholas Battery, lazily picking up the shells which were within reach, although we had no longer any place to put them in.

We were early on board. No separate cabin was to be secured, but we placed our bags in

one which opened from the ladies' saloon, and appeared to be unoccupied. Very sad we felt as we glided out of the roadstead. The scene of many happy days was fading from our farewell gaze. Should we ever again, we asked ourselves, visit Sebastopol? The steamer was crowded. There were a good many ladies on board, returning from Yalta Aloupka and the villas along the coast. They were good-looking and well-dressed, but had not altogether a pleasant air. Some of them had long strings of amber beads, which they passed continually through their fingers. These, we thought, were some sort of rosary, but were afterwards informed that it was merely a fashion adopted by the coquettish dames of Southern Russia, in order to show off the beauty of their hands.

The sea was too brisk to be altogether pleasant; but we kept on deck and borrowed a glass in order to see the mouths of the Katcha, the Alma, and the Bulganak, six miles north of which we looked out for the thin strip of beach on which the allied troops had landed, and then remained below until we slackened steam in the vast bay of Eupatoria, and anchored at a little distance from the shore. This town was the scene of the first interview which took place between allied officers and the Russian officials.

Colonel Trochu and Colonel Steel, along with an interpreter, were despatched to summon it to surrender. The Governor, or head-man of the place, unmoved by seeing the mighty fleets which were floating before his eyes, took matters very quietly. He might have felt himself in a difficulty, but he had the rules of office to support him. So when the summons was delivered, he insisted upon having it carefully fumigated, according to rule, and when he was made to comprehend that the three powers intended to land their soldiery, he said that "decidedly they might do so; but that it would be necessary for them to land at the Lazaretto, and consider themselves in strict quarantine." On the following day the place was occupied by a small body of English troops, who found that nearly all the Russian inhabitants, including the officials, had vanished.

Night had nearly closed in by the time we anchored off Eupatoria, but the scene was still animated. There was plenty of shipping, lights streamed along the quays and twinkled in the town, and the bright moonbeams danced upon the waves. The place presented an appearance of some importance. It is enriched by the number of Karaim Jews who reside there. These Jews, who claim descent from the Sadducees, reject the

Talmud, resting their faith upon the Bible alone.

As soon as the vessel began to move again, we left the deck, and, settling ourselves for the night, slept soundly until the boat stopped at some to us unknown place, and took in a crowd of passengers. The cabin doors were ruthlessly flung open, and our fate was to be invaded by a woman and child, who had evidently no claim to be put amongst the first-class passengers. We were off once more; not, however, to rest in peace, for the night was spent in crossing the stormy mouth of the deep gulf of Perikop, and the ship rolled heavily, which, not agreeing with our fellow-traveller, she made herself so very objectionable that we had to complain to the stewardess.

We got on deck as early as we could in the morning, picking our way across the saloon through lanes of mattresses appropriated by groaning ladies of fashion, and, as we were now out of the Gulf Stream and in smoother water, we were able to look about us. Amongst the passengers there were two remarkably handsome young Russians. They looked very like tall, healthy Freshmen, let loose from one of our Universities; and, as they spoke French, we heard from them a little of what was passing. Our attention was attracted by the appearance

of an immensely tall, broad-shouldered man, who had an honest and somewhat handsome face. His attire was by no means calculated to diminish his unusual size, for he wore an ample blouse of grey linen, which was belted round his stalwart form. He proved to be a son of Schamyl, the heroic Caucasian chief, and looked every inch a mountaineer. His height, we were told, was six feet six inches.

Odessa was founded by the Empress Catherine, in the year 1796, and she bestowed upon it the name of the ancient Greek settlement of Odessus, the ruins of which are scattered along the steppes a little to the east of the present town. The place is conveniently planted in a sheltered bay, nearly midway between the mouths of the Boug, to the east, and the Dniester, to the west, and it rapidly rose to commercial importance. Considerable privileges were accorded to it. It was exempted from all sorts of military impositions, and became the capital of Southern Russia, and the residence of the Governor-General, who is independent of the cabinet of St. Petersburg; while, to add to these advantages, it was declared a free port. Under the restrictions imposed upon it by the Emperor Paul, its trade languished, but only to flourish with renewed vigour under the less

narrow rule of his successor; and although, since the Crimean war, it is no longer a free port, yet its commerce has gradually increased up to the present time, and it now ranks as the third city of all the Russias.

"As we approached the high cliffs on which it is situated, we were a little disappointed. The scene did not equal in beauty the view which we had seen pictured of it in the gallery of the Hermitage, and we had no longer the sunny glow, shed so freely over Sebastopol, to gild the prospect. The sky was cloudy, the air was cold, and a little rain fell. We had been hoping to have arrived earlier in the day, and to have been able to attend the Protestant service, which is celebrated in a room set apart for the purpose in a private house. But the boat was late, and we heard the bells ringing for the opening offices of the Russian Sunday. There was a prodigious crowd and bustle upon the quay, but no lack of vehicles, one of which my companion secured, and after waiting until the most eager of the passengers had landed, we got upon it, and ordered ourselves off to the Hôtel de Londres, the names of the hotels being here once more French. The ascent to the town was very steep, and no sooner had we entered it than we found that the principal

streets were barred by ropes. There was a prodigious clamour of bells, and music, and voices, and we caught sight of the tail of a procession, as it wound round a corner.

We racked our brains to try and remember if the day was one set apart by the Greek Church as a holiday, but the holidays in Russia are few and far between, and we could bring to mind nothing to mark this particular Sunday. At last two good-natured passers-by held up the rope for us to pass, and, driving along a handsome boulevard, we drew up at the Hôtel de Londres. "Full to overflowing," was the answer to our humble request for a room. We were equally rejected at three other hotels we drove to, and had sundry other ropes raised, in order to allow us, as travellers, to pass, before we found shelter at the Hôtel de l'Europe, a huge, comfortless barrack, where we obtained half dark quarters in an extensive range of cell-like rooms, with windows looking out upon a wide, brick-floored corridor. The whole arrangement was exceedingly like that of a model prison. The prospect was in no way lively, but there was a bed, and a sofa, and a very small jug and basin, and we consoled ourselves by reflecting that we had only two nights to remain. So we took possession, and having

ordered dinner, were on the high road to making ourselves comfortable, when, oh! horror, my companion discovered that she had left her dearly-beloved packet of books on board the steamer. Now this packet consisted of a Koran, which, in spite of its fine type and strictly orthodox points, was my pet aversion. It weighed at least three pounds; and, in addition, there were another three pounds, in the shape of grammars, dictionaries, and Arabic stories; and many a time had I given their grey backs a spiteful kick, and longed to send them flying out of a railway carriage, or over the bulwarks of a ship. However, it was agreed that, on descending to dinner, we should send a commissionaire to claim them. But no such convenience as a commissionaire was to be had. We asked the waiter, and we asked the people at the bureau, but they were most indifferent, barely civil, indeed, and so, after remarking that they might with propriety show a little more complaisance to strangers, we put on our bonnets, sallied forth, found a carriage, ordered ourselves off to the Kertch boat, and were soon descending the steep road by which we had previously mounted.

Reaching the quay, my companion in hot haste rushed on board the *Hylæ* (the classical

name of our vessel), whilst I remained in pawn in the vehicle, so far happy in mind that I knew to a certainty that the books would be recovered; and when I saw my grey-backed enemy borne exultingly towards me, I felt more strongly than ever that that Koran had been printed, points and all, for my particular inconvenience, and never more sincerely did I wish that Mahomet's sheep had been born without shoulder-blades.

The evening being overcast, we did not care to prolong our drive, and remembering that we had promised to call upon our eccentric acquaintance, Madame V——, who had given us her direction at the Londres, we were set down there. We had scarcely remarked its flourishing appearance when rejected in the morning, but found it to be a large and handsome hotel, commanding a view over the "Duke's Garden," a succession of terraces, so called, descending to the sea, and prettily planted with trees and flowering shrubs. The inhabitants of the town are exceedingly proud of this pleasure-ground, as also of a grand flight of steps, which, as well as the gardens, were planned by the late governor, Prince Woronzoff. A number being handed to us at the bureau, we traversed galleries which appeared to be endless, and at last

found Madame V—— in a room which, like our own at the l'Europe, opened upon a corridor. She was most vivacious, professing herself enchanted at seeing us again. The husband and nephew had been forwarded to Naples; but the governess was still with her. At that moment, however, she was out purchasing candles and soap.

Madame gave an animated account of her housekeeping, which must have been, we thought, most uncomfortable: Coffee, bread, and a small portion of dinner, she took from the hotel, all other necessaries she herself provided. She also made the beds and swept the rooms, the governess having wisely declined the task, and we did not think that the yellow silk dress was improved by the process. Madame was about to cross the country—in a cart, probably—to Kief, make her way thence to St. Petersburg, and so on to Paris. She declared Odessa to be gay and pleasant, the gardens and sea-view being delightful, and said that a good military band played every afternoon, assembling round it all the beauty and fashion of the place. The dust appears to be the great drawback to this town. Madame declared that it was almost intolerable, and congratulated us upon having mud instead. There was a scud of rain in our

faces as we picked our way home through the ill-paved streets, but, with the exception of the thunder-shower which we had encountered on our way to the Sparrow Hills, this was the first wetting we had got since leaving Stockholm.

The night was stormy, the morning showery, and we were obliged to unstrap waterproofs and umbrellas before setting out upon a shopping expedition. We were in want of tea, sugar, biscuits, and various small articles of toilet. In fine weather Odessa must be a gay and bright town; the shops are large and handsome, and excellent Reading biscuits and other English commodities are to be had. My companion, having completed her purchases, did not wish to prolong her walk, and, returning to the hotel, we passed some well-furnished fruit-stalls, which it was the habit of the place to erect at the corners of the principal thoroughfares. We stopped at one of them, with the intention of buying some grapes, but finding the price extortionate, declined to take them. All food is dear in Odessa, as it comes from a distance; nothing will grow upon the inhospitable limestone steppe on which it is situated. A still more serious evil is the want of fresh water, all that is really wholesome being conveyed to the town by an aqueduct, which is far from

yielding a sufficient supply. The site of Odessa was known to the Genoese in the fourteenth century, and called by them Genestra, on account of a ragged plant which overran the spot.

Having deposited my companion at the l'Europe, I set off again, partly on a voyage of general discovery, and partly in search of photographs; and seeing a large cupola in the distance, I made towards it. This dome proved to be my evil genius, and I must have gone over at least two miles of ground in endeavouring to reach it. As I advanced it appeared to recede, and I finally got entangled in streets which curved away from it. The pavement was of unequal merit—sometimes exceedingly good, at others rough and uneven, and occasionally it was altogether absent, and in the latter case there intervened long stretches of mud and stones, difficult to traverse. In vain did I search for a photographer's, not one could I find, although, French being universally spoken, I made many inquiries. I succeeded in nothing that morning, and at the end of a couple of hours returned to the hotel, muddy, weary, and discomfited.

In spite of the indifferent weather, I was impressed with the cheerful appearance of the place. There was plenty of bustle in the wide

streets, and the large, substantial stone houses looked as if inhabited by wealthy people. But if I had suddenly been set down in the middle of the city, in ignorance of its name and position, I should have been puzzled to say what country I was in. There is nothing national about Odessa, and I should perhaps have imagined myself to be in some modern German town. By the next morning the weather had a little recovered itself, and we walked up and down in the Duke's Garden, and into the Boulevard, in the middle of which stands a fine bronze statue, erected to the memory of the Duc de Rechlieu, a former governor, and a great benefactor to the town. From the inscription upon it we found that he, and not Prince Woronzoff, had laid out the terraced pleasure-grounds. We had some idea of visiting the museum, where the candlestick of Howard the philanthropist is considered the chief object of interest, although it contains some valuable coins, and a few inscriptions and sculptured stones, found upon the shores of the Euxine. Time, however, was short, and we hastened home, obtained our passport, with its Turkish *visé* (we had almost forgottten that we had a passport, so seldom had we required it in Russia), and prepared for our departure.

The boat was to sail at four o'clock, but we were on board by three. The weather was such that there was small prospect of a good passage to Constantinople. The shores of this sea are very delightful, but it has earned a reputation for danger. A well-known author writes: "The Black Sea is a truer name than the Euxine. Now, as in old times (if the Summer be hardly past), the voyager leaves a coast smiling bright beneath skies of blue, and glowing with sunny splendour; yet perhaps, in less than an hour, the heavens above and the waters around him are dark with the gloomy and threatening aspect belonging to the Northern Ocean." As yet we were the only passengers on board, and seeing many cabins apparently vacant, we applied to the steward for a separate one; but he was utterly obdurate. "They were reserved," he said, "for the gentlemen." There was nothing more to be got from him, so we next hunted out the captain, a singular-looking man, with wooden features and blazing black eyes. He also was about to say no, but my companion made him a pretty, beseeching speech. He stopped, looked at her, hesitated, and finally accompanied us below, and gave us permission to take what cabin we pleased. We were grateful, and made a deli-

berate choice, suspecting that great part of the next forty hours would be spent downstairs. This important business settled, we went on deck to watch the influx of passengers. The last came hurriedly on board, the steam was up, the anchor weighed, the bell rang from the shore, the paddle-wheels slapped the water with two or three irregular beats, and off we rushed from the shores of mighty Russia, straining our eyes, that they might dwell as long as possible upon the receding cliffs; and it was not until the last streak of land melted into the horizon that we went below.

We were cold and sad. We had spent above three months in Russia, traversing by land, river, and sea some thousands of miles—we reckoned considerably above four thousand—unable to speak or understand the language, and utterly at the mercy of the people we were amongst. We had met with the utmost respect and courtesy from all classes. Other countries look down upon Russia, and consider it to be in a state of semi-barbarism; but in some respects the innate civilization and gentleness of its people contrast favourably with the manners of more-refined communities. In respect for women, in kindness to animals, and in gentle courtesy of manner, its population stand out

conspicuous. Then surely the simple religious zeal of the Ruski is very pleasing; his religion he makes part of himself. If his Czar, his high priest, or his creed be attacked, it is true that he becomes an infuriated madman, else he is a gentle, kindly creature. Doubtless, also, he loves his vodka, though now he often takes his chai instead. His climate is very cold, and he does not love the touch of water; but then the poor Moujik for three-quarters of his year must melt his ice before he washes his hands, and so he gets out of the habit of cleaning himself. Then he is hospitable to a degree, and has more than the generosity of an Arab, who will follow and murder the stranger whom he has welcomed to his tent. Once eat the bread and salt of a Ruski, and he will never afterwards attack that guest by word or deed. Surely these traits of character are excellent—at least, so we thought them; and we left Russia with a warm feeling of regard for its people.

THE END.

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